

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Emily Carr Elementary School is in a densely populated urban setting at Oak Street and King Edward in the Douglas Park area. We have 330 students in grades Kindergarten to seven. The school is named after the Canadian writer and painter, Emily Carr.

Our school population has diverse needs and abilities. We fully integrate all students, including those with Ministry Designations that represent their specific learning requirements and those who are learning to speak English. We strive to achieve the meaningful participation of all students.

Parents are formally involved in our school through an active and supportive Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and with generous contributions to fund-raising, organizing school events, and supporting students' academic, social, and cultural growth. The PAC's Inclusivity and Diversity Committee continues to grow and promote support and connection with families who have children who have disabilities or are neurodivergent, with initiatives, such as information coffee sessions for parents and lunch and organizing learn opportunities for staff. They have also worked to add books to our school library on various topics around diversity and neurodiversity.

Students at Emily Carr are well-rounded, successful children with a variety of background experiences. They have many strengths in the BC Curriculum Core Competencies including positive communication skills, solid creative and critical thinking, and a strong sense of personal and social responsibility. Students celebrate many aspects of their learning through activities including performances, assemblies, concerts, sharing within classes and between buddy classes, volunteer opportunities and field trips. Student Leadership programs (including Peer Helpers, Kindergarten Leaders, Activity Leaders, Library Monitors, Hallway Monitors and Equipment Monitors) as well as student clubs/initiatives (such as Emily Carr's Got Talent Club, Social Justice Club, Beading Club, Crafting Club, Kindness Club, Chess Club and Book Club) continue to grow at Emily Carr Elementary, contributing to a positive school culture where students work in teams to achieve tasks and build communication and interpersonal skills, while promoting values of volunteerism, community service and cooperation.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Overall, the Emily Carr community of learners is highly motivated to succeed in all subject areas. Many of our students have good communication skills, like to talk and are not afraid to ask questions. Also, they like to read and follow directions and routines relatively well.

Our students demonstrate a strong sense of community, as seen in the growing number of student leadership programs and the consistent number of intermediate volunteers that run these student-led programs. Students are eager to be helpers around the school for a variety of tasks and regularly enjoy being 'big buddies' to younger students through reading and other activities. Emily Carr students volunteer to help in a variety of ways and make a difference, both in the school and the general community. A general sense of kindness exists and is evident daily, across the grades, with many who act as champions for others who need a boost in this area.

This is an active school, with many students that enjoy participating in school sports teams (ex. cross country, soccer, ultimate frisbee, volleyball club and basketball club) and daily student-initiated sports (ex. soccer, football, and square ball, etc.). Additionally, Emily Carr students express their ideas/views and explore their personal interests through a growing number of clubs (Social Justice Club, Book Club, Emily Carr's Got Talent Club, Crafting Club and Beading Club, etc.). They celebrate diversity and enjoy learning about social justice issues.

However, we have many newcomers and ELL students who struggle to make connections. They require English language instruction and support to acclimatize to their new learning environment. Additionally, there are students with high social-emotional needs and some students that have experienced trauma or big life challenges. Many students are continuing to learn to regulate their emotions and struggle with peaceful conflict. Most behaviour-related incidents can be related to a lack of self-regulation skills resulting in physical or verbal outbursts. Students are working on taking responsibility for their belongings, actions, and their learning. Many students have difficulty with attention, staying calm, alert, and focused. There is a wide range of learners, academically, and students with exceptionalities, demonstrating a need for differentiated learning, support, and sometimes creative ways to help students achieve in all developmental areas.

The school is addressing students' social-emotional learning (SEL) needs through a comprehensive approach that includes early identification of vulnerable students, creating inclusive and calming classroom environments, and implementing targeted SEL programs. Staff collaborate on resources, share strategies, and engage in professional development to support both student and adult SEL. The school also fosters connection through extracurricular clubs, restorative discipline, literacy engagement, and community-building events, all aimed at promoting well-being, belonging, and academic success.

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

As a school community, we are continuing to apply trauma informed practices in our classrooms and broader school environment to address behavioural concerns, and establishing a sense of belonging, connection, and support for all. Trauma-informed practices include teaching students Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies to help create supportive and safe learning environments.

We are working on enhancing school engagement and improving student achievement in areas, such as literacy and numeracy physical and mental well-being, and belonging with a collaborative staff focus on SEL to help students develop self-awareness and self-management skills. SEL strategies help by teaching students how to identify, express and manage their emotions, as well as build healthy relationships, which are crucial for feeling safe and supported. This is important for all children and particularly important for students who have experienced trauma, as they may struggle with emotional regulation.

Moreover, it is important that these needs are supported by the whole school community, not just through the roles of specific staff. Building on our conversations about trauma informed practice from our 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 School Learning Plans, our team continues to identify targeted strategies and resources that help create a safe, caring, supportive, and positive environment for staff, students and families. The more that students are emotionally connected to their learning, the more likely they are to participate actively and retain information.

Data collected through Student Learning Surveys from 2023-2024, our teacher led class reviews from 2023-2024 and our MDI data from 2022-2023 provided insight into where our collective efforts could help to improve the success of our student.

The 2023-2024 Student Learning Survey showed that Emily Carr students had lower response rates compared to the District's student population in areas related to physical and mental wellbeing and belonging. For example, in response to the statement, 'At school, I am learning how to care for my mental health' from the Grade 7 Student Learning Survey (2023-2024), 28% answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree', which is far below the district average of 54%. In response to the statement, "At school, I am learning how to care for my physical health", 49% answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree', which is also significantly below the district average of 63%. Further, when students were asked to respond to the statement 'When I am stressed, there are things I can do to feel better', only 52% responded 'most of the time' or 'all the time'.

Class reviews in 2023-2024 also highlighted that we have a significant number of students that would benefit from opportunities to develop a stronger sense of belonging and strategies that would have a positive impact on student physical and mental wellness. It showed that 15.8% of students were identified as vulnerable in physical and mental wellness and 10.9% of students were identified as vulnerable in belonging, as identified by staff.

Additionally, 2022-2023 MDI data showed that connectedness with adults and peers was lower than the district average. For example, only 31% of students were able to identify two adults at school they felt were important to them, which was below the 52% district average. This data

further supports focusing on strategies that could improve physical and mental well-being and belonging at Emily Carr.

Our 2023-2024 class review data on literacy and numeracy from the third term written summary of learning, revealed 6.7% of students were assessed at the emerging level in language arts and 4.2% of students were assessed at the emerging level in math.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies can significantly enhance student achievement in literacy, numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and a sense of belonging. It fosters critical thinking and empathy, helps students manage emotions and reduce anxiety, promotes healthy interactions and a supportive environment, encourages physical activity and healthy lifestyles, and creates an inclusive classroom where all students feel valued. SEL builds strong peer relationships, improves the overall school climate, and supports both academic success and overall well-being. Emily Carr staff recognize the importance of providing all students with social-emotional learning (SEL) and self-regulation support.

Through an increased collective effort on SEL strategies (individual, classroom and whole school) we have seen a positive impact on students' mental and physical health. In the 2024-2025 Student Learning Survey, in response to the statement, 'At school, I am learning how to care for my mental health' 61% answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree', now exceeding the district average of 54%. In response to the statement, 'At school, I am learning how to care for my physical health, 70% answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree', which again came out above the district average of 66%. Further, when students were asked to respond to the statement 'When I am stressed, there are things I can do to feel better, 61% responded 'most of the time' or 'all the time', which is 9% higher than the previous year. Additionally, the 2024-2025 MDI data showed that connectedness with adults and peers increased to 55%, which is 24% higher from the 2022-2023 comparative data and 10% higher than the district average for 2024-2025 and the 2024-2025 third term written summary of learning, staff identified that 4.2% of students were assessed at the emerging level in Language Arts and that 2.7% of students were assessed at the emerging level in math, which have both decreased from the 2023-2024 data.

Overall, the 2024-2025 data demonstrates that we are on track to create an environment for promoting physical and mental well-being and belonging at Emily Carr, which we believe has contributed to improved student achievement in academic areas, such as literacy and numeracy.

Improve equity

The Emily Carr school community is working to promote equity in the school community and to ensure that all students have access to the same opportunities and success. Clubs, teams and leadership opportunities are crucial for developing essential skills, fostering community engagement and building confidence and social skills, ultimately preparing them for future success.

At Emily Carr, students have been invited to access varied activities through various clubs, teams and leadership groups. We offer athletics each year, and additional programming through the Community Schools Team. This year both choir and band opportunities were offered before school and at lunch. Leadership groups have been a long-time tradition at Emily Carr, with

sustained numbers of students getting involved throughout the year. We support clubs, such as our Social Justice Club and Book Club, run by teaching staff. Additionally, we have both student-led and parent-led clubs, such as Crafting Club, Beading Club, Chess Club, Emily Carr's Got Talent' Club and the Kindness Club.

All children, including students who come from imposed conditions, benefit from opportunities to foster relationships, build confidence and foster feelings of belonging and connection. We will continue to see if these extracurricular activities are helping to meet their needs.

Class reviews in 2023-2024 highlighted that we had a significant number of students that would benefit from opportunities to develop a stronger sense of belonging and strategies that would have a positive impact on student physical and mental wellness. It showed that 15.8% of students were identified as vulnerable in physical and mental wellness (ex. anxiety, etc.) and 10.9% of students were identified as vulnerable in belonging, as identified by staff. Comparatively, the 2024-2025 class review data showed that 13.2% of students were identified as vulnerable in physical and mental wellness (ex. anxiety, etc.) and 10.1% of students were identified as vulnerable in belonging, as identified by staff, showing a slight decline in students identified as vulnerable in physical and mental wellness and belonging.

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

In keeping with the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation final report, it continues to be the responsibility of educators to take the 94 calls to action seriously and implement changes to increase knowledge and understanding within our learning communities. In the words of the Honourable Murray Sinclair, "It was education that got us here and it will be education that will get us out." Our school is committed to supporting and enhancing understanding of Indigenous world views and knowledge. Emily Carr students and staff have been engaged in various activities to increase empathy and awareness of Indigenous histories and cultures.

Staff have been having ongoing discussions and awareness regarding the story of Indigenous peoples in Canada at assemblies and in classrooms. Additionally, we have dedicated our front lobby to displaying different forms of Indigenous culture.

We invited Indigenous author, educator and storyteller Kung Jaadee to provide an interactive workshop for the upper intermediate students called Reconcili-Action, where she summarizes the key points of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and discusses the Calls to Action and the 6 Actions of Reconcili-Action: To Learn, Understand, Explore, Recognize, Take Action, and Teach Others. Using the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Reconcili-Action plan template, students worked with Kung Jaadee to create their own actionable plan to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination, while also promoting tolerance, understanding and good relations with indigenous peoples.

For the Kindergarten to Grade 5 students, Kung Jaadee shared both Haida and Squamish stories/legends, which include universal teachings about respect, responsibility and the interconnectedness of all living beings. She also shared some traditional songs, as well as her own person stories about growing up as an Indigenous person.

In the 2024-2025 Grade 7 Student Learning Surveys, when asked, "At school, are you being taught about Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Metis) in Canada?", 50% of students responded

'sometimes', 15% responded 'most of the time' and 12% responded 'all the time'. When asked, "At school, are you being taught about local First Nations?", 42% responded 'sometimes', 10% responded 'most of the time' and 10% responded 'all the time'. This is a significant increase from the 2023-2024 Grade 7 Student Learning Survey data, with 66-84% responding 'never' or 'almost never'. However, it should be noted that the previous year's questions differed from the 2024-2025 questions. For example, the 2023-2024 question asked "At school, do you participate in any Indigenous celebrations or activities" and "At school, do you participate in any ongoing Indigenous programs or activities?". Moving forward, our school will continue to integrate learning about Indigenous Peoples in Canada and about local First Nations, and we will continue to monitor the Student Learning Survey data.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will continue to compare our Student Learning Surveys and MDI data, to monitor progress or concerns each year. MDI and Student Learning Survey data feedback related to relationships, connectedness and belonging would ideally show levels that meet or exceed district averages.

We will also continue to identify vulnerable students through our class reviews to see if our programming is providing them with connection opportunities to build a student's sense of belonging, as these social ties that accompany a sense of belonging can be a protective factor for mental and physical wellness.

An exploration of ways in which we can address the educational aspects of the TRC Calls to Action will continue to be reflected in Written Learning Updates (CSL) and a Summary of Learning at the end of the year, as well as monitored through the Student Learning Survey data.