

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

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), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

SCHOOL STORY

Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School (SWC) is located in south-central Vancouver at the intersection of West 54th Avenue and Heather Street. First opened in 1956, the school is home to approximately 2050 students and 140 staff. Our diverse community of learners come from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, travel here from across the school district, and include 160 International Education students joining us from countries around the world. In addition to the regular classes in standard departments, we also offer several District and school specialty programs:

French Immersion Program (Grade 8 – 12) – District Program

Students take four classes taught in French: two French language classes, Social Studies, and Science; along with the remainder (English, Math and electives) in English.

Autism Resource Centre (Grade 8 - 12) – District Program

This Centre is designed for students that are diagnosed with autism and able to meet secondary school expectations with minimal adaptations and support. The Centre provides a place for students to enhance their social, executive functioning, and organizational skills.

Synergy Program (Grade 8 and 9)

A Grade 8 and 9 learning cluster program designed for Churchill students who have demonstrated excellence, have a positive attitude toward learning, are highly motivated and reliable, are curious, critical and creative thinkers and are open to learning in new ways and places. Courses are taught in an interdisciplinary manner, to meet the unique needs of highly capable learners and to foster curiosity, social responsibility, personal and intellectual growth, and leadership.

Prelude Program (Grade 10)

This Churchill Grade 10 program consists of challenging courses that place emphasis on the skills of independent research, analysis, and communication in a variety of forms. Collaboration and self-motivation are key. At the heart of Prelude are two program-specific

courses designed to promote international awareness, leadership, and community engagement: International Studies and Prelude Leadership.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (Grade 11 & 12) – District Program

The IB Diploma Program is designed as an academically challenging and balanced program that encourages community involvement and service while also preparing students for success at university. The IB Program values 21st century learning, there is a focus on the development of specific approaches to learning: communication, social, self-management/executive, research and thinking.

The IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Teaching and Learning are frameworks that encourage a holistic approach to education. All teachers and students strive to be:

- Inquirers – curious
- Knowledgeable - well-read, aware
- Thinkers - rational, critical
- Communicators – collaborative
- Principled - honest, act with integrity
- Open-Minded - non-judgmental, unprejudiced
- Caring – compassionate
- Risk-Takers – resilient
- Balanced – mindful
- Reflective - thoughtful

Ideal Mini (Grade 8 - 12) – District Program

This district program is a unique, self-contained, family like “school within a school” offering a safe, collaborative and enriching cohort-based learning environment for academically motivated and creative students. The program fosters a school community which emphasizes social responsibility, collaboration, mentorship and leadership. Ideal Mini is located in a self-contained space within the Churchill main building.

We are a community committed to learning and celebrating that learning!

Students’ learning and accomplishments are celebrated at a variety of school and community shows, fairs, concerts, performances, competitions (fun and formal), tournaments, etc.... Staff make an effort to note and celebrate all kinds of student achievement, not just academic. Diversity and inclusion are celebrated throughout the school year at Churchill, as we focus on equity and belonging for everyone in our school community.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

GOAL: Promote a sense of belonging and well-being by creating safe, inclusive spaces, prioritizing mental health support and ensuring equitable representation within our school community, increasing student voice opportunities and continued anti-racism work with staff and students.

The Youth Development Instrument (YDI) (2022-23) would indicate that our learners feel safe and connected to students and staff at Churchill and are very engaged in education and volunteering in and outside of school. However, our students reporting a strong sense of belonging, purpose, empathy, gratitude, self-concept and life satisfaction is lower than expected. General physical health, mental health literacy and mental health attitudes were also lower than expected.

The Student Learning Survey (SLS) supports the above in indicating that our students feel safe and supported at school, but that in terms of learning how to deal with emotions, feeling like they belong, feeling good about themselves and having strategies to maintain physical health and wellness, learning basic life and social skills needed for the future, our Grade 10s do not report as positively in this area as some of our other grades. Our Grade 12s feel much more positive and optimistic about their learning and the preparation for the future.

COMPASS Survey (2022 and 2024) results indicate that Churchill students feel safe and close to people at school, spend a lot of time doing homework, and again, feel less purposeful, capable, engaged and optimistic. 2024 survey results suggest that our priority on student mental health has improved outcomes going from 41% of students in 2022, reporting feeling nervous, anxious or on edge on most days in the last few weeks, going down to 31% feeling this in 2024. An interesting result shows that while 70% of our students are meeting the national guideline for physical activity, 57% of them are trying to change their weight. Survey results suggest that equity, inclusion, and belonging need to be a priority as 52% report feeling unwelcome or uncomfortable at school. Additionally, 3% of our students meet the national guideline of spending 2 hours or less on recreational screen time/day for a variety of reasons.

For the most part our learners do very well on their report cards and on Ministry Assessments: Numeracy 10: 74% of our students are Proficient or above; 84% are Proficient or above in Literacy 10; and this is 90% in Literacy 12.

When asked “What is going on for our learners?” staff answered (in order): anxiety, tired, excitement, fatigue; and commented that they find our students to be very grade conscious. When students were asked what one word best described their experience of school over Semester #1, they most often answered “stress” or “stressful” followed by “tiring” and “exhausting”.

As a result of our scanning, we will continue our focus beyond academics, on building belonging and supporting students’ social and emotional learning and growth.

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

In our vibrant school community, we recognize that literacy and numeracy are foundational skills essential for success in all aspects of life. And while SWC fairs well in our Ministry Assessment results (see results on previous page), as educators, parents, and students, we collaborate to create an environment that fosters growth and proficiency in these critical areas. Our goal here is to maintain and/or improve outcomes on the Ministry Assessments in both areas of literacy and

numeracy. In this first year, we started by scanning the staff for their thoughts on this school goal and received the following feedback about how we are currently supporting our students.

Tailored Approaches for Diverse Learners: We celebrate the uniqueness of each student. Our teachers employ a variety of teaching methods, catering to different learning styles. Visual aids, hands-on activities, storytelling, and technology integration ensure that every student can engage with math and language effectively.

Real-Life Connections: Learning doesn't happen in isolation. We weave real-world examples into our lessons. Whether it's calculating grocery bills, analyzing news articles, or exploring scientific phenomena, students see the relevance of literacy and numeracy beyond the classroom.

Empowering Student Agency: We encourage students to express their understanding in creative ways. Whether through writing, presentations, or artistic projects, they learn that literacy and numeracy are tools for self-expression and problem-solving.

Early Intervention and Support: Recognizing that some students face challenges, we provide targeted support. Skills blocks, peer tutoring, and additional resources help struggling learners build a solid foundation.

Promoting Pleasure Reading: We advocate for reading beyond textbooks. Our library is a treasure trove of diverse books, enticing students to explore different genres. Reading for pleasure enhances vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking.

Remember, literacy and numeracy aren't just academic skills—they empower our students to navigate a complex world, make informed decisions, and contribute meaningfully. Let's continue this journey of growth and learning!

Mental Well-being and Belonging – classroom practices: In fostering a positive and inclusive classroom environment, teachers employ a variety of practices. They begin with check-in questions, which allow students to express their feelings and experiences. By offering multiple formats for presentations and conducting vocabulary checks, teachers accommodate diverse learning styles. Talking circles and an open-door policy create a safe space where all students feel welcome. Encouraging communication and building confidence through respectful pressure ensures that every student has something valuable to contribute. Personalizing instruction, using student names, and getting to know students individually further enhance the sense of belonging. While group and pair learning activities connect students to the subject matter, teachers recognize that some students may not attend class regularly. To address this, they share resources through poster projects and engage in round-robin reading. Patience, trust-building, and maintaining an environment where students interact with each other (away from phones) contribute to a positive atmosphere. Ultimately, teachers strive to make students feel a sense of belonging by focusing on relationships and building academic achievement through that connected lens and caring for student well-being.

Improve equity:

In this first year, we started by scanning the staff for their thoughts on this school goal and received the following feedback:

Equity – classroom practices: In pursuit of equity, teachers engage in conversations and observations without judgment. They take a deeper dive into understanding the needs of students with diverse learning and language requirements. Reflecting on existing policies, they question whether these policies truly promote equity or if there's room for improvement. Flexibility and an understanding that everyone learns differently are key to achieving equitable practices. Teachers also recognize the limited diversity represented in the literature taught in high school and emphasize the importance of authentic voices. Incorporating field trips, case studies, and art—guided by the principle of 'nothing about us without us'—allows students to explore different perspectives and contexts. Additionally, teachers strive to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) by providing visual and verbal instructions and offering various ways for students to engage in learning. Promoting cooperation over competition, allowing multiple formats for assignments (online or hard copies), and implementing small strategies like movement breaks and mindfulness contribute to making content accessible and creating an inclusive classroom environment.

What teachers wonder in this journey: Teachers harbor several curiosities related to equity and inclusion in their classrooms. Firstly, they wonder how banning phones might impact equity and access. While the ban could discourage distractions, teachers recognize that some students rely on phones for notetaking or catching up on Teams. Secondly, they inquire about structured opportunities for individualized learning support at Churchill. Are there daily chances for students to receive personalized assistance? Additionally, teachers seek ways to change their class openers to be more inclusive, fostering a welcoming environment for all. They also express interest in securing funding for sensory equipment in the ARC (Alternative Resource Center). Regarding Universal Design for Learning (UDL), teachers desire more information on implementation and assessment, especially for eighth graders who are developing social and executive functioning skills. Exploring professional development opportunities, including a full-day session with Destine Lord, remains a curiosity. Lastly, teachers emphasize that student accountability is not synonymous with equity; they aim to redefine inclusion and promote social justice. In working through these curiosities and wonderings we hope to improve our measurements in the 2024-25 Compass Survey discussed on p. 3.

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

Staff are feeling engaged in this work and seeking to continue their learning – here is their feedback:

Classroom practices: Acknowledging the ongoing journey of reconciliation, teachers actively weave indigenous learning into their class routines and lessons, making it a natural part of the course. Talking circles and sharing circles provide spaces for open dialogue and community-building. Storytelling, a powerful tradition, occurs almost daily, emphasizing patience and the time

required for meaningful learning. Teachers encourage each other to ‘just do it’—to try out lessons and strategies that have been shared within the educational community. Recognizing colonial attitudes that historically separated nature and humans as distinct entities, teachers now strive for an equal human-environment framework. They draw insights from research, personal experiences, conversations, and historical and current perspectives. Appropriation is acknowledged, and teachers engage in circle check-ins, where they buy and give students small snacks to foster class community. Actively participating in local indigenous activities further strengthens connections. Teachers realize that even seemingly ordinary activities can be approached with an indigenous lens, fostering community and appreciation for outdoor spaces. Despite uncertainties, teachers aim to bring more circle storytelling into the classroom, applying basic principles and ensuring students see the connections.

What teachers want to know more about: Teachers often wonder about how to further indigenize their practice, seeking ways to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into their teaching. The goal being to support one another and learn together to improve the depth and breadth of Indigenous content in courses, thus further deepening student appreciation and knowledge of Indigenous culture and traditions. A secondary goal is to further embed the First Peoples Principles of Learning in their practice. Here are some considerations:

1. **Math Class Integration:** Teachers explore how to infuse indigenous issues into math lessons. This involves connecting mathematical concepts with indigenous perspectives, history, and cultural contexts. For instance, exploring traditional Indigenous counting systems or incorporating land-based mathematics can deepen students’ understanding.
2. **Authenticity and Inclusivity:** Teachers strive for authenticity in their teaching, ensuring that Indigenous content is presented respectfully and without burdening Indigenous communities. Inclusive teaching practices within constraints (such as curriculum requirements) allow for meaningful integration.
3. **Cultural Awareness:** Teachers recognize the need for continuous learning and cultural awareness. They seek resources, attend workshops, and engage in professional development to deepen their understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and worldviews.
4. **Advocacy for Funding:** Teachers advocate for equity and reconciliation practices to receive adequate funding. They recognize that these practices are essential but may not always be prioritized within educational systems.
5. **Geopolitical Understanding:** Teachers explore how to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into geopolitical discussions. Understanding the roles of colonialism in the actions of great powers helps foster critical thinking and empathy.
6. **Collaboration and Access:** Collaborating with Indigenous educators, guest speakers, and local First Peoples provides authentic learning experiences. Teachers seek access to resources and experts who can enhance their teaching.
7. **Hands-On Activities:** Teachers design hands-on activities that integrate Indigenous culture into science lessons. This could involve exploring traditional ecological knowledge, land stewardship, or Indigenous contributions to scientific fields.
8. **Indigenous Music:** Professional development sessions led by experts in Indigenous music provide strategies for incorporating impactful Indigenous music and resources into the classroom.

While challenges exist, teachers remain committed to indigenizing their practice and promoting reconciliation. They inquire about available resources, protocols, and opportunities for collaboration to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

This year, our School Learning Plan focused on promoting a sense of belonging and well-being by creating safe, inclusive spaces, prioritizing mental health support, ensuring equitable representation, increasing student voice opportunities, and continuing anti-racism work. Below is how we are acting on these goals through our three focus areas, and how we know our strategies are working:

1 A. Improving Student Achievement in Literacy and Numeracy

Staff are using a variety of strategies to support literacy and numeracy development across disciplines:

- **Literacy:** Teachers are incorporating daily vocabulary work, reading programs, and a wide range of texts to build comprehension and engagement. Mock literacy exams have helped students prepare for provincial assessments. Scaffolding strategies, such as curated handouts and duotangs, support access to complex texts.
- **Numeracy:** Educators are emphasizing mathematical vocabulary and comprehension, helping students distinguish between every day and academic language. In applied settings, students use numeracy in project-based learning, then reflect on and articulate their mathematical thinking.
- **Assessment & Engagement:** Students demonstrate learning through multiple formats—written, oral, visual, and kinesthetic. Teachers assess progress through student output, participation, and the demonstration of ALT (Applied Learning and Thinking) skills.

Evidence of success 1A: Students are more confident in using academic language, more engaged in class, and show improved performance on assessments. Teachers note increased initiative, such as students reading ahead and problem-solving independently.

1B. Mental Well-Being and Belonging

This area is at the heart of many classroom practices and is deeply embedded in daily routines:

- **Relationship & Community Building:** Teachers prioritize daily check-ins, attendance questions, and one-on-one conversations to foster trust and connection. Classrooms are intentionally structured to be inclusive, with flexible seating, group work, and community-building activities.
- **Safe & Supportive Environments:** Educators create spaces where students feel safe to take creative risks, share ideas, and be themselves. Teachers model vulnerability and resilience, share personal stories, and normalize challenges like anxiety.
- **Boundaries & Resilience:** Staff are also supporting mental health by setting clear expectations and boundaries, helping students build resilience and accountability.
- **Cross-Curricular Support:** In Foods, PE, and Library programs, staff are integrating strategies to support comfort, challenge, and representation. For example, the library offers diverse materials that reflect students' identities and interests.

Evidence of success 1B: Students report feeling seen, heard, and valued. They are more willing to participate, take risks, and attend class regularly. Teachers observe stronger peer relationships, increased confidence, and positive feedback through surveys and informal conversations.

2. Improving Equity

Equity is being addressed through inclusive practices, differentiated instruction, and curriculum design:

- **Differentiated Assessment:** Teachers offer multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning, including alternatives to traditional presentations and assessments. Resubmission opportunities and flexible deadlines support continued growth.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Staff integrate the histories and experiences of marginalized groups into everyday learning, helping students understand systemic inequalities and normalize diverse perspectives.
- **Support for ELL and Diverse Learners:** Teachers collaborate with student support teams to scaffold learning and ensure access for all students, particularly English Language Learners.

Evidence of success: Students are engaging with equity-focused content in meaningful ways, incorporating it into their evaluations and discussions. Teachers note increased participation and success among students who previously struggled with access or confidence.

3. Continuing the Journey of Reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

While not always explicitly named, the principles of reconciliation are reflected in the inclusive, relationship-centered, and equity-driven practices described above. Teachers are fostering respect for diverse perspectives and creating space for all voices to be heard.

Next Steps: We aim to deepen this work by integrating more Indigenous content and perspectives into our curriculum, and by continuing professional learning focused on reconciliation and decolonization.