

2024-2025

School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, the Cunningham community is honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwatał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Cunningham Elementary School was first opened in 1959 as an annex to Norquay Main School and was originally named Norquay School Annex. After the building was expanded to meet the growing population, it was officially reopened in November 1966 and named G.T. Cunningham Elementary School. George T. Cunningham (1889 – 1965) was a lifelong resident and businessman of Vancouver who was honoured for his philanthropy, public service, and dedication to education. His family continues to volunteer and be active, highly valued members of our school community.

Cunningham is a vibrant and welcoming learning community that prioritizes student social-emotional and physical well-being combined with academic success. We have empathetic learners who understand that everyone has different skills and abilities. With a student population of over 400, our school site and playground serve as a cornerstone for the community.

A dedicated staff work together to provide a well-rounded education for all students. Staff work to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for all, to ensure that every student can thrive academically, emotionally and socially. The staff are working to support students in building independence and resiliency. At Cunningham Elementary, student well-being is of utmost importance. We strive to create a safe and nurturing environment where students can flourish. Our holistic approach to education emphasizes physical activity, social responsibility, and academic excellence. Our students are encouraged to be curious learners, authentic individuals, respectful towards others, and enthusiastic about their education.

We have a strong emphasis on community service by the students. Various leadership opportunities also arise during the year and include assembly emcees, student announcers, and library monitors. The majority of our students, upon completing grade 7, attend Gladstone Secondary. Cunningham alumni return regularly to see their former teachers and other staff that were here when they were students.

Diversity and inclusion are celebrated at Cunningham Elementary, where we embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of each learner. We are in a neighbourhood with multi-generational families. Some parents of current students attended Cunningham themselves when they were students. Our diverse student body includes a significant English Language Learner (ELL)

population. Approximately fifty percent of our student population identifies an additional language, other than English, spoken at home.

Parent involvement is highly valued at Cunningham Elementary, and we have the privilege of having caring and involved parents who actively contribute to the school community. The strong relationships between home and school are nurtured and maintained, ensuring a collaborative and supportive educational experience. Cunningham is fortunate to have an engaged Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Some PAC initiatives include creating a pumpkin patch in the courtyard and a book giveaway, where every student receives a book to read at the end of the school year. These initiatives make a big impact in building a sense of community at our school. The PAC strengthens the bond between the school and the community, providing parents with a platform to actively contribute to the school's activities. This collaboration fosters a sense of partnership and ensures that parents' voices are heard and valued.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and many speak a language other than English at home. They are eager and willing to learn and engage in outdoor learning opportunities with enthusiasm. Students are engaged by the hands-on learning opportunities in the courtyard space and garden beds. They are respectful, friendly, and caring. Students are willing to persevere in their learning even when it's difficult, and they are proud of their accomplishments. Our students embrace the arts. They are provided with opportunities to explore and create with a variety of mediums. There is a high engagement in clubs, both at lunch and after school. Students take part in extracurricular activities when they are offered such as choir, chess, Cricut and knitting, as well as basketball, volleyball, track and badminton. Cunningham students are enthusiastic, encouraging and welcoming when we have new students who join our community.

Last year, the staff looked at data and engaged in many discussions around student learning. We discussed strategies of teaching using a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. When we teach using a UDL approach, we are enabling all students to access the curriculum and increase their sense of belonging. Our hope was that a UDL approach to teaching would increase literacy scores. We compared the CSL data for Language Arts from March 2024 to March 2025. By focusing on oral language during this school year, we were hoping to see an improvement in the overall literacy of our students. The focus on strengthening oral language should also be reflected in students' ability to read and write.

Based on the Communicating Student Learning for Language Arts data in March 2024, approximately 14% of the students were emerging, 47% were developing, 28% were proficient and 10% were extending. In March 2025, approximately 15% of the students were emerging, 55% were developing, 27% were proficient and 3% were extending. We were hoping to see an improvement in the proficient scores from developing to proficient in the overall CSL scores by 3-5% this school year. Although we saw a slight increase in the emerging and developing categories, we did not see the increase we were hoping to. Therefore, we will continue to work on the goal next year with an emphasis on oral language and include a focus on reading.

This year, we also began collecting baseline data about the students' oral language abilities. Each classroom teacher completed a rubric for each student. They completed one in November 2024 and one in April 2025. The beginning of the year data indicated that of the 426 students at the school at the time, 89 (21%) of our students were emerging, 185 (45%) students were developing, 138 (32%) students were applying, and 14 (3%) students were extending. Our goal was to see an improvement of 5% of the students moving up one category. In April, using the same rubrics, 420 students who were evaluated in November were evaluated again in April. In April, 55 (13%) of our students were emerging, 134 (32%) students were developing, 188 (45%) students were applying, and 43 (10%) students were extending. Overall, there was an improvement of 7-13% for each of the performance descriptors. This means that we did achieve our goal. The staff would like to continue to focus on oral language next year too so that we have further data to examine. We also want to examine the students' reading scores. We will compare reading assessments for the students in October and April and hope to see a similar increase as the oral language goal.

The curricular integration of Indigenous worldviews is an important aspect of education at Cunningham Elementary. The school recognizes the significance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems into the curriculum to promote understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. At Cunningham Elementary, evidence of understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge is fostered within the school community through various initiatives. One way this is achieved is by embedding Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum across different subjects, such as incorporating Indigenous literature, art, history, and some language into lessons. For instance, teachers use books written by Indigenous authors, display Indigenous artwork in the classroom, and teach about the history of Indigenous peoples in the local area.

According to the results of the 2024 Student Learning Surveys, 97% of the Grade 4 students reported that they are learning about Indigenous Peoples sometimes, most of the time or all of the time. Of the Grade 7 students, 84% answered the same question with a response that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that they are learning about Indigenous Peoples. Our goal was to see this increased to 100% in each grade level on the 2025 Student Learning Surveys. The results of the 2025 Student Learning Surveys indicated that 99% of the Grade 4 students and 87% of the Grade 7s answered this same question with a response that they are learning about Indigenous Peoples sometimes, most of the time or all of the time. As a staff, when looking at the results, we decided that we wanted the Grade 7 results to be at least 90% for the 2026 surveys. We will continue to work on this goal for next 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

Through experiential and placed-based learning, we are working to improve and increase our students' oral language skills and vocabulary. We have literacy goals in oral language and reading because we believe that when the students have an increased vocabulary, we will see improvements in reading comprehension as they will have more knowledge and understanding.

Our focus on developing oral language skills will help to support students' ability to communicate and express their thinking about what they are learning and how they are feeling. This focus will improve students' success in literacy and numeracy as well as their social emotional well-being.

A goal on developing vocabulary and building background knowledge will help students in all subjects to explain their comprehension, such as being able to explain mathematical understanding and describe their scientific observations. It will also allow them to express themselves more clearly when interacting with their peers to peacefully solve problems.

Improve equity

We will strive to create opportunities for all students to actively participate and feel a sense of belonging within our community. Our equity focus is using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure that every student has access to the necessary support and resources to thrive academically and emotionally, contributing to their overall success and well-being in an educational setting.

By taking a Universal Design for Learning approach when teaching all subjects, we create an equitable learning environment. This will ensure success for all learners. All topics can be accessed and used by all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning styles. This ensures that learners can access information in a way that works best for them. By offering multiple options for engaging learners and stimulating their interest; it can provide choices on topics or activities, incorporating multimedia elements, offering hands-on experiences, and connecting learning to real-world contexts. By accommodating different interests and preferences, we can increase engagement and motivation for all learners.

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

At Cunningham, we are continuing on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit. Our literacy focus on oral language ties into the First Peoples Principles of Learning. At Cunningham, we embrace place-based learning in our classrooms and in our outdoor learning program. We understand that learning is holistic, experiential and relational. Learning is embedded in story-telling which connects to our goal on oral language development. An Indigenous Enhancement Worker supports staff and students to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are integrated into the curriculum in a meaningful and respectful way. Through these initiatives, Cunningham Elementary has created an inclusive learning environment that promotes respect for Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems.

The Indigenous Education Worker has collaborated with classroom teachers to teach lessons exploring Indigenous cultures through story and legend telling. For example, she shared the story of Turtle Island. By being in the classrooms, she is making connections with the students who are Indigenous and is also exposing all of the students to the story telling aspect of Indigenous cultures. She has done many story-telling workshops with follow-up Art and writing activities. She includes visuals in her lessons, and these are left behind in the classes so that students can explore more with the materials during Centers.

Indigenous learning is inherent within the outdoor learning program both through the way the students learn as it is hands-on, experiential, and connects students to the land. The content of the

lessons includes learning Indigenous names of local plants, Indigenous perspectives and stories about the environment. All of our experiences in the outdoor learning program incorporate First Peoples Principles of Learning.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

To enrich students' oral language and increase their vocabulary and background knowledge, staff engage in rich conversations and discussions to increase the students' ability to critically think and to make predictions. Teachers will continue to reference the Vancouver School Board's Responsive Literacy Framework. This framework guides teachers to approach literacy (comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness and fluency) through the lens of First Peoples' Principles of Learning, place-based pedagogy, documentation and assessment, culturally-responsive pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning. Vocabulary will be explicitly taught, and lessons embedded throughout each teaching area. They will continue to use visuals attached to words so that students can associate a visual when they see or hear a word.

Oral language and reading will be enriched through discussions of stories in guided reading groups, literature circles and whole class read alouds. Students will share what they are reading individually by doing book talks and presentations. They will develop opportunities to create their own stories with story workshops and share these orally with each other. Students will understand that there's a beginning, middle, and end and this will increase the capacity of storytelling. They can make graphic novels of their experiences, and they can explain what happened before that led to where we are right now. It will also help them make connections, take more risks, and build their resilience.

We will know that we are on track by using oral language rubrics and reading assessments to measure growth and improvement over a six-month period. Conducting an assessment in October and then again in April, we will collect individual scores based on the rubrics and assessments. By the end of the year, we believe that students will have shown an improvement in their oral language scores.

In addition to using Universal Design for Learning and equity to help build community and belonging at Cunningham Elementary, the staff are using social emotional learning strategies and are providing leadership opportunities. To ensure that we are on track, it is important to establish clear benchmarks and measurable outcomes. These include things like changes in student behavior and engagement, increased participation in community projects, and positive feedback from students, families, and staff. Ongoing evaluation and data collection will be essential to assess progress towards these outcomes and make any necessary adjustments to the plan. Additionally, regular communication and collaboration among all stakeholders will be key to ensuring that everyone is working together towards the shared goal of building a strong and supportive school community.

Indigenous cultural activities and events are also important for fostering an understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge. To ensure we are on track, Cunningham Elementary will continue to invite Indigenous speakers to speak to students and organizes cultural field trips.

These activities will provide students with a firsthand experience of Indigenous culture and help to develop a deeper understanding and respect for Indigenous worldviews.

At Cunningham, we will continue to work on our goals to improve achievement, equity, and our journey of reconciliation.