

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Killarney Secondary School serves a diverse student population of approximately 1600 students and is situated in the Southeast corner of Vancouver. Killarney offers a comprehensive program of studies for students. We offer a wide variety of course offerings including extensive Fine Arts (Theatre productions, Choir, Concert Band, and Orchestra) Applied Skills, Business Education, Cisco networking, an IT focused Mini School, three District Special Education programs, Technical Studies programs, and a large, comprehensive athletics program.

There are many opportunities for students to connect with people, clubs, teams, performances, and the greater Killarney community. Dozens of school clubs, school presentations, student involvement in assemblies, and other points of connection help to create a sense of belonging for all students. Clubs include: Dance club, Mainstage Theatre Company, Operation smile, SPCA, book club, Anime club, VC packages Club, BC Children's hospital club, Robotics, Programming, Cybesecurity, esports, Filipino Cultural club, Killarney Pride Club, Ceramics, Anti-bullying, STEM, Girls for Business, World Vision, Cancer Awareness, Library, International Culture, Cycling, Dragonboat, Strategy Games, Good Guys, Model UN, Gardening, Key, Female empowerment, Japan, Finance and Accounting, Youth Music, Flight, Chess, Crochet, Physics Olympics, Poetry, Jazz band, and Muslim. BC School Sports Competitive Athletics include: cross-country, soccer, ultimate, badminton, volleyball, basketball, ice hockey, and the largest track and field team in the district.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Our community of learners is very diverse in terms of cultural background, socioeconomic status, language, and learning needs and desires. There are 127 ELL students, 46 Indigenous students, 50 International students.

Overall, staff report that students are a pleasure to teach and engage with learning and assessment. Students are described as generally energetic, happy to be here, involved, diverse, helpful, and keen. There are many opportunities for students to shine and students take advantage of these opportunities excelling in district and provincial competitions.

Staff note that the range of abilities within the classroom has increased dramatically. More and more anxiety and mental health issues. It has been noted that student ability to focus has declined and cell phone use/social media use has become significant and pervasive.

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

Continue to work collaboratively to implement cognitive and social-emotional strategies that will support an improvement in student achievement, physical well-being, and belonging. We plan to focus on ELL learners and neurodivergent learners; success will be demonstrated with improved course completion rates for these demographics.

Improve equity

Increase equity at the school through the participation and representation of equity-seeking groups in the school. We aim to provide extracurricular opportunities including clubs, student bodies, and the visible celebration of different cultural and ethnic events. We also seek to increase equity through eliminating gaps in achievement and outcome among students.

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

Increase knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all learners. We plan to do this by Engaging and gathering with the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nations). And through continued staff acquisition and implementation of Indigenous teaching resources.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and belonging

Continue to work collaboratively to implement cognitive and social-emotional strategies that will support an improvement in student achievement, physical well-being, and belonging. We plan to focus on ELL learners and neurodivergent learners; success will be demonstrated with improved course completion rates for these demographics.

At the whole staff level, experts were brought in to work during collaborative time and pro-D days to explain the theory and practice of working with neurodivergent learners. These learning sessions included Angela Murphy (trauma-informed practice), Natalie Wai (Keys to supporting adolescent literacy in secondary classrooms), Carly Herman (Universal Supports for Instruction and Assessment), and Dr. Randall Gillis (Autism Spectrum Disorder in Highschool). To help put some of these ideas into school practice, the School Based Resource Teacher (SBRT) designed documents for all staff showing how Universal Classroom Strategies could be implemented in the areas of engagement, representation, and action and expression. Another in-house document was created by the SBRT to process accommodations for those students seeking supports for assessments.

This year saw the culmination of a four-year long CyberTeens research study focused on well-being and belonging, and conducted by Dr. Jennifer Shapka of the University of British Columbia. This study asked students a variety of questions around Belonging and also involved whole staff activities that focused staff attention on improving the belonging of all students including a pictorial activity that had staff seek to ensure that every child in the school was known to a staff member beyond their attendance and achievement within a class. To improve student mental well-being, Warren Hooley presented workshops to grade 8 and 9 students on non-violent communication and the organization Children of the Street presented to students on safety from sexual exploitation, especially through social media.

School departments have implemented a variety of strategies to support literacy development tailored to their subject areas. The Social Studies Department uses scaffolding techniques, vocabulary aids, and leveled reading resources to enhance comprehension and critical thinking. The English Department collaborates with literacy mentors and emphasizes vocabulary instruction, reading strategies, and diverse reading materials, including non-fiction and literature circles, to support varied reading levels. The Physical Education Department integrates literacy through instructional modeling and terminology comprehension. In Mathematics, focus is placed on reading comprehension of word problems and vocabulary building. The Modern Languages Department promotes literacy through authentic texts and comprehension exercises in target languages. The Counselling Department supports literacy indirectly by coordinating interventions and resources for struggling students. The Fine Arts Department highlights the correlation between music education and literacy development, emphasizing phonological awareness and vocabulary. Lastly, the Science Department fosters literacy through structured writing formats

like CER, note-taking strategies, and reading assignments that connect students with engaging scientific content.

Several departments are actively supporting numeracy development through subject-specific strategies. The Math Department emphasizes problem-solving skills, particularly in interpreting and extracting information from word problems, which supports preparation for the Numeracy Exam. They are also collaborating with administration to explore additional initiatives while balancing student workload. The Science Department focuses on data interpretation, graph creation with proper scaling, and solving calculation-based problems by identifying key terms. The Modern Languages Department incorporates practical math activities and number review in target languages, reinforcing numeracy in real-world contexts.

Departments across the school are actively promoting student well-being through diverse and integrated approaches. The Physical Education Department emphasizes regular physical activity through scheduled runs, circuit training, and fitness testing. Modern Languages incorporates health and nutrition topics into food and sports units. The Counselling Department supports students with wellness planning, safety strategies, and promotes the five pillars of well-being: sleep, nutrition, movement, connection, and goals. They also organize wellness walks and adapt supports to individual needs.

Math classes include movement breaks, vertical board activities, and ergonomic guidance in IT settings. The Fine Arts Department fosters emotional well-being through creative expression, a calming classroom environment, and outdoor art activities. English classes promote mental health through literature, brain-based learning strategies, and opportunities for self-expression via poetry and journaling. They also encourage empathy and respectful dialogue. In Science, students explore nutrition, immunity, reproductive health, and the impact of lifestyle on brain chemistry. Activities like nature walks, study method exploration, and discussions on media influence support both physical and mental health. The integration of well-being science and happiness tips further enhances students' understanding of healthy living.

Departments across the school are actively fostering a sense of belonging through inclusive practices and relationship-building. The Physical Education Department recognizes kindness through "Student of the Month" and promotes teamwork with group activities. Modern Languages builds community through friendship units, cultural recognition, and interactive group work. The Counselling Department supports students by teaching social skills, connecting them with mentors, and recommending clubs or activities to help them feel included.

Math teachers build strong relationships with students, encourage participation during flexible instructional time (FIT), and use group activities to foster connection. The Fine Arts Department creates inclusive spaces through collaborative projects and large-scale productions involving students from all grades and backgrounds. In English, students explore identity and culture through personal projects and diverse literature, promoting empathy and self-expression.

Science classes encourage collaboration through group labs and random pairings, helping new students connect. Activities like whiteboard work also promote peer teaching and interaction.

Improve equity

Increase equity at the school through the participation and representation of equity-seeking groups in the school. We aim to provide extracurricular opportunities including clubs, student bodies, and the visible celebration of different cultural and ethnic events. We also seek to increase equity through eliminating gaps in achievement and outcome among students.

This year we successfully ensured that the display cases at the front of the school recognized International Days, Special days for equity seeking groups, as well as months of representation and times of representation. Examples of this included displays for Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples month, Ramadan, Filipino Heritage month, Pride month, and Asian Heritage month and Eid Mubarak. Broader displays included black history month and Red Dress Day. Assemblies and/or presentations were held for Black History Month (Ndidi Cascade, Vancouver-born hip hop artist, and Nigel Amenu-Tekaa), Lunar New Year (Lion dancing by Hon Shinh Athletic Club). The school also worked closely with the City of Vancouver and the Red Cross to set up a Lapu Lapu resilience center for two weeks. Working with the Pride Club a number of physical changes to the building were made to help the 2SLGBTQIA+ community feel a greater sense of belonging and safety: funding was obtained to move forward with the building of a specific Univesal changeroom with four private stalls, two more universal bathrooms were also added to the building, and the main stairwell was painted with Pride colours. In support of neurodiverse students, the school presented a number of workshops detailed above as well as hosting District LALS Handball Tournament. The following clubs supported equity-seeking groups: Muslim Students Association, Christian Fellowship Club, Filipino Cultural Club, Safe Space Club, Pride Club, Anti-Bullying Club, Safe Space Club, Anti-Bullying Club, Girls for Tech, Female Empowerment Club, International Culture club, Girls for Business, Hong Kong club, Social Justice Club.

Departments across the school also contributed to improving equity. In the Counselling & Modern Languages department, cultural responsiveness is emphasized through collaboration with Indigenous, multicultural, and settlement workers. Religious accommodation is advocated for students observing practices like Ramadan. Support for SOGI students is provided through groups, resources, and external support. Financial equity is ensured so that students with financial needs can access school resources. In the Fine Arts department, inclusive participation is promoted by opening the choir to all students regardless of experience or background. Cultural representation is achieved by performing music from diverse cultures, such as Filipino folk songs. Gender inclusivity is maintained by assigning choir voice parts based on vocal range, not gender. The art curriculum features diverse artists, including Black Canadian and American artists, and creates safe spaces where gender-diverse students feel welcomed and supported. The English department offers a diverse curriculum that reflects a wide range of voices and experiences. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is implemented to provide multiple ways for students to learn and demonstrate understanding, such as writing, art, and performance. Assessment flexibility is provided through opportunities for resubmission and adapted materials to meet diverse needs. In the Science department, assignment flexibility is offered with modified tasks and timelines to suit student abilities. UDL is implemented with lessons available in multiple formats, including reading, watching, and listening. Student choice is encouraged through 'study buffets' that allow students to choose learning activities. Flexible deadlines are provided with grace periods and

multiple chances to show learning. Overall, the high school is dedicated to fostering an equitable environment for all students through these comprehensive practices.

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

Increase knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all learners. We plan to do this by Engaging and gathering with the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nations). And through continued staff acquisition and implementation of Indigenous teaching resources.

This year the entire staff sought to increase knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions through participation in two professional development sessions days. In September, we joined with Takaya tours, a cultural tourism business owned by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. This tour had us explore Whey-Ah-Wichen using canoes with a guided interpretation and history lesson from Tsleil-Waututh guides. In April, staff attended a series of workshops at different schools according to their department. These workshops included: Braiding Sweetgrass, Cedar Weaving, Circle knowledge, Girls Empowerment and Leadership, supporting Indigenous Youth affected by Adverse Child Experiences, Values-based Decolonization in schools, and working with First Peoples Principles of Learning. As reported in the section above, displays were made for days like the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, National Indigenous History Month, and MMIW Red Dress Day.

The school has made a concerted and thoughtful effort to integrate Indigenous perspectives and practices into its educational environment, reflecting a deep respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and a commitment to reconciliation. Across various subject areas, educators are embedding the First Peoples Principles of Learning into both curriculum and classroom culture, creating meaningful opportunities for students to engage with Indigenous worldviews.

One of the most visible examples of this integration is the use of storytelling and learning circles, which are employed not only in language and arts classes but also in physical education and science. These methods foster a sense of community and shared learning, echoing traditional Indigenous pedagogies. In physical education, for instance, classes begin with talking circles for announcements and attendance, and students participate in units on lacrosse—a sport with Indigenous origins—as well as mindfulness walks that connect them to the land. Similarly, science classes incorporate storytelling to explain ecological concepts, drawing from texts like *Braiding Sweetgrass* to highlight Indigenous understandings of reciprocity and interconnectedness within ecosystems.

The arts have also become a powerful medium for exploring Indigenous identity and history. Visual arts students studied Northwest Coast Form Line design and created a Remembrance Day poppy installation inspired by Indigenous artist Robin Roberts. They also examined the work of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun as a counter-narrative to the Group of Seven, encouraging students to

consider Indigenous perspectives on land and landscape. These projects are not only artistic expressions but also critical engagements with history and place.

In English, the school has taken a bold step by requiring all Grade 10 students to enroll in English First Peoples 10, ensuring that every student gains foundational knowledge of Indigenous histories and literatures. The popularity of English First Peoples 12, even among students who have already met their graduation requirements, suggests a growing appreciation for this learning. These courses feature Indigenous texts and guest speakers, offering students direct engagement with Indigenous voices and stories.

Other departments are also contributing in meaningful ways. The counselling team works closely with Indigenous support staff to develop success plans tailored to Indigenous learners, guided by principles of relationship and respect. Mathematics classes are beginning to incorporate Indigenous content into lessons and assessments, while modern languages explore Indigenous cultures of target-language countries, such as the Mayan civilization, through stories and cuisine.

Overall, the school's approach is holistic and evolving. It emphasizes experiential learning, self-reflection, and land-based education, with students measuring carbon in local trees or observing rain gardens as part of their science curriculum. These practices not only enrich academic learning but also foster a deeper connection to place and community. The collective efforts across departments demonstrate a school-wide commitment to honoring Indigenous knowledge and supporting all students in becoming more culturally aware and respectful citizens.