

2024–2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Norquay Elementary, named after John Norquay—the fifth premier of Manitoba and of proud Métis ancestry—is located on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyám (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

With 652 students, Norquay is one of the largest elementary schools in Vancouver. The school is wheelchair accessible and hosts three District Programs: the Elementary Learning Support Program, the Social Emotional Learning Centre, and the Early Mandarin Bilingual Program. Norquay is also a Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) school, with a strong focus on early literacy development.

In 2024–2025, Norquay continues to support the goals of the Education Plan—student achievement, well-being, belonging, equity, and reconciliation—by fostering community and ensuring equitable access. Most school events are by donation to reduce barriers and promote inclusion. Events such as the annual book exchange, Scholastic Book Fair, and extracurricular sports teams are well attended. Students also engage in leadership roles including playground leaders, office and library monitors, morning announcers, lunch-time buddies, and club leaders. They actively support community initiatives like the Poppy Fund, Terry Fox Run, and Jean Up. The student-led equity and diversity club, now including Grade 6 students, continues under the name *Power in YOUth*.

Norquay's dedicated staff create a rich academic and social environment by nurturing each student's strengths and talents. Strong community partnerships enhance this work, including support from the Rotary Club, Growing Chefs, One to One Literacy, Adam's Apples, the Firefighters Snack Fund, and LunchLAB. The Windermere Community Schools Team also provides after-school and break-time programming. The Norquay Parent Advisory Council (PAC) strengthens community ties through events like the annual waffle breakfast, pizza days, movie nights, and the Spring Fair. For the second year, the PAC partnered with LunchLAB to host a Welcome Back Barbecue by donation.

Norquay also maintains strong ties with its alumni. This year, an alumnus funded a school-wide dance program, culminating in a performance involving every student. The PAC alumni chair also reached out to the 2024 Grade 7 class, inviting them to join the Norquay alumni network—an act that connects past, present, and future in meaningful ways.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Norquay Elementary serves approximately 650 students, with about 35% identified as English Language Learners and 28 different languages spoken across home and school. The student population is diverse, with major cultural groups including Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Over the past few years, our school goal has focused on building connections to self, each other, land, and learning. Research shows that caring relationships during the elementary and middle years are essential for student well-being and success. As Oberle (2018) notes, warm, accepting relationships with adults enhance emotional well-being, motivation, and engagement. Using the Student Learning Survey, we focused on the question: "How many adults at school care about you?" In 2023, 50% of students responded "none." In 2024, that number dropped significantly to just 5%, indicating meaningful progress in building a supportive school climate.

Building on this positive shift, we are now turning our focus to literacy, exploring how increased connection and belonging may correlate with academic growth. Research from the Learning Policy Institute (2024) confirms that strong relationships and safe, supportive environments are foundational to learning and are linked to improved academic outcomes, attendance, and behavior. This year, we are highlighting two key data sets. First, the "Love of Reading" survey, where students shared their feelings about reading and offered suggestions to help foster a greater love of reading. All 652 students participated, and we found that among intermediate students, 82.5% responded "Yes," and 11% said "No" and the rest said "Both or Maybe." In contrast, among primary students, 56.5% responded "Yes," 16% said "No," 27.5% selected "Both," and no students chose "Maybe." Second, we are monitoring attendance and third, we are monitoring CSL literacy data from Term 1 (December 2024) to track progress. We aimed to incorporate student suggestions into literacy instruction with the hope to see growth reflected in the CSL data.

To support reconciliation, students and staff have been learning the updated land acknowledgement from the three host nations, including correct pronunciation. This is now shared daily and at all school events, reinforcing our commitment to language reclamation and Call to Action 14.iv, which emphasizes the revitalization of Indigenous languages. This year, we are also highlighting Call to Action 83, which calls for support of collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists. We monitored the design and development and display of these projects throughout the 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; and Improve equity

During the 2024–2025 school year, our focus remained on fostering a strong sense of community through intentional connection—connection to self, to one another, to the land, and to learning. This direction was guided by the voices of Norquay students, staff, and families. Our central inquiry question was: "If we continue to focus on building community, will we see increased engagement in learning?"

The results were encouraging. Our intentional focus on connection began with improving attendance and ensuring equitable access to learning. We took a deep dive into understanding the barriers faced by students who were not attending regularly and worked to create spaces where they felt a true sense of belonging. As a result, overall attendance improved significantly—and for some students, it more than doubled. This increase in attendance was reflected in improved literacy outcomes, as shown in our Communicating Student Learning (CSL) data. In Term 1 (December 2024), 10% of students were assessed as Emerging, 57% as Developing, and 33% as Proficient or Extending. By Term 3 (June 2025), the percentage of students assessed as Developing decreased to 48%, while those assessed as Proficient or Extending rose to 43%. These gains affirmed that incorporating student suggestions—such as initiatives to support their love of reading—had a meaningful impact. One student expressed their appreciation by writing, *“Thank you for doing Camp Read. Please keep doing this!”*

Looking ahead, we recognize that equity must remain at the heart of our work. Building strong relationships is just the beginning. To truly support every learner, our collaborative practices must be inclusive, culturally responsive, and designed to meet the diverse needs of all students. With this in mind, our focus for the 2025–2026 school year is shifting toward *intentional collaboration* as the next step in deepening our impact. Our new inquiry question is: *“Will moving from strong relational connections to intentional collaboration among staff, students, and families to co-design strategies enhance student learning and success?”* This question builds on the foundation we’ve established and challenges us to leverage our relationships in ways that are purposeful, student-centered, and equity-driven. Through intentional collaboration, we aim to co-create learning environments where every student feels seen, heard, and supported to flourish.

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

In 2024–2025, we responded to Call to Action 83 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which calls for increased support for collaborative projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists as part of the reconciliation process. The Power in YOUth leadership group co-designed teaching and learning experiences centered on x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) artist Debra Sparrow and her vision to “blanket the city.” Rather than having the principal and vice-principal decide where the blanket would go and having no student voice, we had all 655 students participate in this learning journey. The YOUth in Power group delivered a lesson in every classroom and then had every student vote. This culminated in the display of her blanket at the library entrance—a powerful symbol of Indigenous brilliance and our ongoing commitment to reconciliation.

This blanket continues to inspire us to ask in 2025/2026: How can we continue to decolonize our worldview and transform our practices to reflect more inclusive, relational, and reconciliatory ways of knowing and being? To guide this work, we will engage in ongoing reflection and action using questions from Indigenous scholar Carolyn Roberts:

- Whose voice is present?
- Whose voice is missing?
- How can we include multiple perspectives?

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

When we model interconnectedness, students gain a deeper understanding of the importance of collaboration in addressing complex challenges and achieving shared goals. We will collect data through the lens of the Grandmother Perspective (September 2020), which shares the concept that 'we need to know because we care'. Therefore, we will use qualitative data sets such as stories, interviews from students, staff, parents and caregivers. In addition to quantify the success of the inquiry question: "will moving from strong relational connections to intentional collaboration among staff, students, and families to co-design strategies enhance student learning and success?" we will use:

- school wide report card data and CB-IEP reviews
- attendance at student-led conferences and CB-IEP meetings
- representation in resources