

## 2024-2025 School Learning Plan

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### SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Musqueam people. Southlands is proud to be the catchment school for students from the Musqueam nation.

Southlands Elementary School is a warm, welcoming, multicultural, and diverse community with a strong focus on building a sense of belonging. We are an International Baccalaureate School, servicing students in kindergarten to Grade 7. Southlands has up to date IB accreditation and is in full compliance with International Baccalaureate criteria. As such, we focus on noticing, naming, and nurturing the Learner Profile Attributes. We facilitate learning experiences in which students can become knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring risktakers, communicators, and thinkers. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, our staff collaborates in planning transdisciplinary units of inquiry and is dedicated to fostering the 10 attributes of the IB learner profile. Our staff is committed to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and principles of learning into every aspect of the curriculum. We maintain strong home-school relationships through regular communication and have a supportive parent/guardian community that helps us achieve our goals. Southlands is focused on outdoor education, utilizing our location next to Pacific Spirit Park as an access point for students to explore the forest and the natural world.

The Southlands community reflects the First People's Principles of Learning and acknowledges the importance of living in harmony with the environment, recognizing the land as a source of knowledge and identity. Both the IB curriculum and the First Peoples' Principles of Knowing advocate for a comprehensive, respectful, and reflective approach to education. They encourage learners to engage deeply with knowledge, appreciate diverse perspectives, and recognize the interconnectedness of all aspects of life. This alignment not only enriches the Southlands educational experience but also fosters a greater understanding of our shared humanity and responsibility towards the world.

Students at Southlands Elementary are supported by an amazing staff of educators that includes 11 classroom teachers, 4 resource teachers, an Indigenous enhancement worker, a curriculum enhancement teacher, 8 student support workers, a counsellor, a youth and family worker and many more individuals who make up our team. We are a host of One-to-One readers, Jericho Kids Club and other programs that support our community throughout the year.

Our community is actively focused on caring for Ourselves, Others and this Place. Alongside those expectations we are working towards improving our ability to provide equitable education, a

sense of well-being and belonging. We are also working towards sustained, impactful reconciliation.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Southlands Elementary is committed to continuous growth and excellence in education. We are currently preparing for our **IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) Evaluation**, scheduled for 2027. This evaluation is a significant milestone that occurs every five years and serves as a comprehensive review of our implementation of the IB philosophy, standards, and practices.

The IB evaluation process involves:

- **A thorough self-study** conducted by the school community, including staff, students, and families.
- **Evidence collection** of teaching practices, student learning, and community engagement aligned with IB standards.
- **Professional development** to ensure all staff are well-versed in IB pedagogy and the Learner Profile attributes. Approaches to learning pedagogy encompasses "Approaches to Teaching"
- **Curriculum review and refinement** to ensure transdisciplinary units of inquiry are robust, inclusive, and reflective of global and local contexts.
- **A site visit** by IB evaluators who will observe classrooms, review documentation, and meet with stakeholders.

We are proud to say that Southlands is in an **excellent position** to succeed in this evaluation. Our staff is deeply committed to the IB philosophy, and we have already embedded many of the core elements of the PYP into our daily practice. Our focus on student agency, inquiry-based learning, and international-mindedness is evident throughout the school.

In preparation for 2027, we will:

- Continue to build staff capacity through targeted IB professional development.
- Strengthen documentation and reflection practices.
- Deepen integration of Indigenous perspectives and local knowledge into units of inquiry.
- Engage the community in the self-study process to ensure a shared understanding of our goals and achievements.

This journey toward evaluation is not just about meeting standards—it's about reaffirming our commitment to providing a world-class, inclusive, and reflective education for every learner at Southlands.

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## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

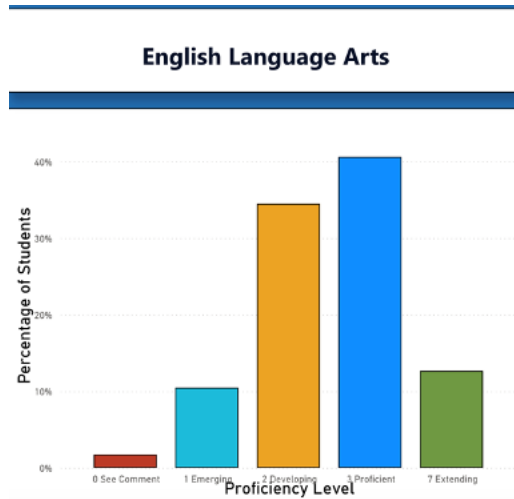
Southlands welcomes a unique community of learners. We are the proud host to over 50 students from Musqueam, we have a large cohort of International Education students from all over the world, we also service several families that are new to Canada. This diversity creates a rich learning environment that allows students to immediately be a part of a community that welcomes everyone.

Students love the outdoors; we are situated on Musqueam land and are lucky to be surrounded by forests with access to hiking trails. We often take advantage of this proximity to nature through forest walks and other activities.

Our learners are strong, resilient, and intelligent. They are creative, hard-working, collaborative and self-starters. We are a student-centered school community with countless opportunities for student leadership, participation, and action in our school. Being an IB school allows students to view the world through that lens; we focus on the learner profile attributes of the IB program and take a thoughtful approach to learning about our community, the land, the globe and how everything is interconnected. Some are more confident learners than others. Students come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and many speak two or three languages. They welcome students who are new to our school and are appreciative of differences. This year we introduced 'think sheets' to our students from kindergarten to grade 7. A think sheet is a way for students to reflect on things that have happened and to learn to be accountable for their actions. We are hopeful that this process leads to an improved restorative justice approach. Students will explain what happened and how they were feeling at the time; sometimes we make interesting choices when we're hungry or tired or excited and it is an important part of the process to identify those feelings. Think sheets are an opportunity to learn and grow; students develop executive functioning, self-awareness, cognitive flexibility and emotional regulation skills.

The data from our Student Learning Surveys (SLS) from 2023/24 shows that overall, students are happy and comfortable here at Southlands. There is a strong sense of belonging, well-being and a recognition that the majority of students feel they are improving their academics on a regular basis. When asked, "Do you like school?" Over 80% of our Grade 4 and 7 students responded positively. Over 85% of students also responded positively to the question, "At school, do you respect people who are different from you?" We acknowledge that continued work is needed for fostering a further sense of community and respect.

Our community of learners also presents some gaps in literacy rates. Just over 50% of our students are at the proficient or extending level in Language Arts. This is something we are working to improve through consistent literacy interventions at a schoolwide level.



We have a diverse group of students who excel in many different ways. One of our goals at Southlands is to recognize the genius in every single one of our students and provide a learning environment that allows all students to flourish.

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## 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

We have identified gaps in our literacy and numeracy achievement in our school. The staff are fully engaged in rectifying these gaps. We are in our third year of our current literacy intervention. We take a schoolwide approach to literacy instruction and are currently experimenting with a number of literacy strategies and assessments. We are using literacy programs and assessments including UFLI, StoryChamps, DRA, Dibels, and more.

With physical and mental well-being and belonging in mind, we have a Forest Walk program where students explore the forest with our counsellor, principal, and other staff members. We practice mindfulness while exercising and being outside.

Finally, as an IB school we are building towards our PYP Program Evaluation in 2027. This requires a deep dive into our curricular and pedagogical practices, our community building, IB policies and procedures, and much more.

### Improve equity

The staff at Southlands are committed to an equitable approach. We believe that having a schoolwide literacy plan is part of our equity approach. We are also looking at how we can offer more opportunities to our students who don't often get opportunities in and out of school. We believe that every student should have an opportunity to learn and experience the things that they are interested in and have those barriers to learning removed. Our Youth and Family Worker, helps connect families and students with opportunities outside of school hours and provides support to those families for a variety of needs.

We can start our equity journey by educating ourselves on what equity really is. Equity is not always fair but it serves those who have been systemically impacted by a number of factors. If we can work to remove barriers from those who face obstacles in every day life we can bring about a more equitable school environment.

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

We are in a unique position here at Southlands. As the school for Musqueam students we have the potential to be a district leader in reconciliatory practices. We are in the midst of bringing more Indigenous practices into our school, focusing on learning the Musqueam language, hən̓q̓əmin̓əm, and also bringing in more drumming practices into the school. We are also working on a new mural for the school. We hope to have all of these things established by the end of this year. Currently, we are practicing weaving in most classes. We have also recently erected a house post, created by Brent Sparrow. This is the centerpiece of our outdoor space and we are very proud to have this on our schoolgrounds.

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## HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

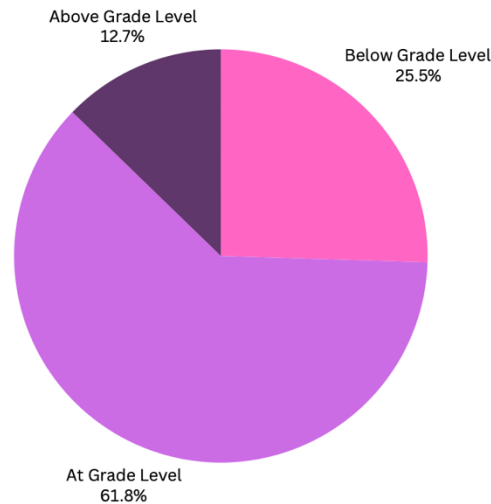
Southlands is a strong community with engaged students and families. It is such a unique school, due to its diversity, location, and IB programming. There is no other school like it in Vancouver. Our goals are aligned to the goals of the Vancouver School Board. We are focused on equity, reconciliation and student achievement and well-being. We track these goals in a number of ways.

**Schoolwide Literacy Program** – Every student at Southlands participates in our schoolwide literacy program. We provide literacy interventions for all students to improve their decoding, comprehension, and writing skills.

Student Learning Survey data shows that 76% of our grade 4 students feel they are getting better at reading. Literacy data reflects that we have just over 75% of our grade 4 population reading at grade level or above while most of the remaining 25% have shown improvement this year. 77% of grade 7 students responded that they were getting better at reading.

Overall primary literacy data shows that just under 75% of readers are at grade level or above. This is something we are working towards improving and would like to get up to over 80% next year and then continue to improve year after year. Students have shown improvement this year, schoolwide. This is a result of an engaged and committed staff, combined with a clear plan for literacy improvement. With the help of the curriculum enhancement teacher and resource team, the staff has developed a schoolwide approach that allows us to meet students where they are, and provide targeted, direct instruction to each individual student.

## Kindergarten - Grade 4 Literacy [June 2025]



**Belonging and well-being** - 77% of our grade 4 and 7 students "always or most of the time" feel welcome at the school, according to SLS data. This is a positive number, and we are looking to improve that in the future. When asked if the adults in the building treat students fairly, the responses dipped to about 60%, which demonstrates a need for staff to ensure that students are feeling heard and responded to.

Belonging and well-being data is also reflected in the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) - a self-assessment instrument run out of UBC that surveys student well-being. The grade 6 students at Southlands responded very positively to their sense of 'peer belonging', with 74% of them saying it was high, which was well above the school district average. When asked, "At my school there is an adult who believes I will be a success", 94% responded in a positive way. This shows that the Southlands staff let students know that we believe in them. When asked about their academic self-concept, 91% of grade 6 students at Southlands responded positively.

Student Learning Survey results showed that we have continued work to do to teach about Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Of the 57 grade 4 and 7 students surveyed, only 10 responded that they were learning about Indigenous Peoples all the time, while just under half of the respondents said they learned about Indigenous Peoples in Canada "Sometimes". We will work to improve that in 2025-26, as one of our main goals is to weave Indigenous principles and perspectives into everything we do here at Southlands.

To create more community and thoughtfulness we have started a few different initiatives; to spread kindness and to work on restorative justice. Students are given "kindness leaves" when they do something kind, these can be given to students by staff or other students. Our kindness tree started with barren branches and by the end of the year, it is completely full of acts of kindness.

## **Our journey of reconciliation**

We continue to look at data based and anecdotal tracking so that we can ensure we are continue to address reconciliation efforts. We will be adding a custom question to our Student Learning Survey next year. This question will be about experiencing and learning Indigenous perspectives at the school. We'll track the growth year after year. We will also continue to focus on Indigenous ways of learning in professional development sessions as a staff. Southlands is working towards developing further collaborations with the Musqueam community for art and music. We also gather community feedback, conduct informal walkthroughs of the school and classrooms, collect student reflections and promote student leadership and action.