

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Strathcona Elementary is located on the unceded traditional lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał Úxwumixw (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, where our students and staff learn, grow, and build community together. Situated in Vancouver's Downtown East Side near historic Chinatown, Strathcona is the city's oldest elementary school. As a dual track (English and French Immersion) enhanced services site, we serve approximately 493 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Our student body reflects a wide range of lived experiences, languages, and cultural identities, with 32 self-identified cultural or language groups represented—an essential source of vibrancy and strength within our school.

Strathcona's unique character is further reflected in its three architecturally distinct buildings, which house classrooms, a cafeteria, an auditorium, and a shared gymnasium with the Strathcona Community Centre. The E building also hosts preschool, daycare, and out-of-school care programs, demonstrating our deep and ongoing partnerships with families and community organizations.

Over one-third of our students self-identify as Indigenous, with roots in Nations across Turtle Island. We are committed to honouring and amplifying Indigenous knowledge, voices, and leadership throughout our school community. This commitment is woven into daily classroom learning, cultural assemblies, and school-wide events that celebrate Indigenous teachings and ways of being. These efforts are further enriched through strong connections with organizations such as the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), Red Fox Healthy Living Society, and local Indigenous childcare centres.

To support students and families, many of whom are impacted by systemic inequities, intergenerational trauma, and poverty, Strathcona offers a range of enhanced services designed to foster safety, well-being, and belonging. These include a daily lunch program, social-emotional supports, and health services provided by the RICHER program, the Strathcona Community Dental Clinic, the Vancouver Community College Dental Hygiene Program, and providing students with eye exams and glasses through the VCH Optometrist pilot program.

Our close relationship with the Strathcona Community Centre further strengthens our ability to meet student and family needs through before- and after-school care, a breakfast program, weekly food distribution, and inclusive recreational programming.

Beyond academics, Strathcona nurtures a thriving extracurricular culture with high levels of student involvement in music, athletics, and leadership opportunities. We deeply value the role of parents, caregivers, and community partners in co-creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming school environment. At Strathcona, belonging is not just a goal; it is a lived experience that shapes every part of our school day and every member of our community.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

The heart of Strathcona Elementary lies in its vibrant community, strong connections, and the creative use of diverse resources to uplift and support every learner. Our students come from culturally rich, multilingual, and intergenerational communities that offer a wealth of knowledge, lived experience, and resilience. Students actively contribute to school life as peer helpers, big buddies, library and office monitors, cafeteria leaders, and members of the powerful Red Fox drum group where they showcase their leadership, collaboration, and pride in their identities.

At Strathcona, we recognize that learning happens in many forms. Strathcona students thrive in environments that embrace STEM, Story Studio, inquiry-based learning, cooperative approaches, and project-based models that honor their curiosity and creativity. Relationships are at the core of our learning community, and it is through these trusting and reciprocal connections that we come to understand our students more deeply. Not only how they learn, but also what brings them joy, safety, and meaning.

We acknowledge the complexity and brilliance each student brings, particularly those navigating life circumstances shaped by intergenerational trauma, displacement, or systemic inequities. We recognize that some learners arrive at school without prior access to early learning experiences, and so we intentionally build foundational readiness, social-emotional skills, and culturally anchored self-regulation strategies that affirm students' identities and support their growth. Many of the learners live within complex systems shaped by socio-economic inequities and historical injustices, including racialized barriers that continue to impact access and opportunity.

Supporting students at Strathcona means holding space for the whole child while also standing alongside the broader community in solidarity and collaboration. Rather than viewing challenges as deficits, we see them as opportunities to strengthen our supports. Chronic absenteeism and late arrivals are approached with compassion and curiosity, as signals of larger stories and unmet needs. Our collective response is guided by empathy, care, and a belief in every child's potential to thrive within a safe, responsive, and joyful learning environment.

Strathcona students are navigating their learning journeys with courage, creativity, and resilience. Through attendance patterns, classroom engagement, and CSL data, we are gaining valuable insights into areas where students may require deeper connection and support, particularly in literacy, mental health, and overall engagement. Rather than viewing these data points as deficits, we approach them with curiosity and empathy, asking: ***What are our students trying to tell us? How can we co-create learning environments that honor their strengths and respond to their needs?***

Literacy continues to be a key area of growth and opportunity. Classroom assessments, student reflections, and educator observations collectively point toward the importance of continued investment in both reading and writing skills. We recognize that foundational literacy skills are not just academic benchmarks but tools of empowerment and expression. Over 50% of students are developing these skills at their own pace, and our response is rooted in relationship, explicit instruction, and differentiated learning. To ensure our instruction is responsive and effective, we are tracking student progress in reading specific skills three times a year using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). This regular monitoring allows us to celebrate student growth, identify areas for targeted support, and adjust instruction to meet diverse learning needs.

Encouragingly, student voices from the Grade Four Student Learning Survey (SLS) affirm that the foundation for growth, *belonging, connection, and safety*, is firmly in place:

- 86% of students report feeling a sense of belonging
- 92% know there are two or more adults at school who care about them
- 82% say they are happy at school
- 91% feel welcome
- 93% feel safe

These expressions of trust and wellbeing are powerful indicators that Strathcona is a community, not just a school. It is a place where students see themselves reflected, respected, and supported as they grow into their full potential.

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

At Strathcona, our primary areas of focus remain engagement, belonging, and community building, all foundational elements for creating a learning environment rooted in dignity, care, and connection. Central to this work is our commitment to improving literacy outcomes through intentional, explicit, and sequential phonics instruction that supports all learners, particularly those who benefit from more direct and structured approaches to reading in both English and French. We are expanding our literacy practices to include the use of Indigenous decodable texts that not only support foundational reading skills but also reflect the cultures, languages, and worldviews of the students and communities we serve. These culturally grounded resources help us center Indigenous ways of knowing while fostering pride, visibility, and engagement among students.

All this work is held within a trauma-informed and decolonizing lens. We understand that creating a safe, calm, and connected school climate, where students' emotional, social, and physical needs are honored, is essential to academic success. Our approach continues to align with the VSB's commitment to equity, inclusion, and Indigenous education. We recognize that supporting literacy is also a powerful act of justice and liberation.

Improve equity

Equity is not a standalone initiative at Strathcona Elementary, it is a guiding principle embedded in every decision, relationship, and support system we create. We recognize that many Strathcona families carry the weight of intergenerational trauma and may have experienced disrupted or harmful relationships with educational institutions. In response, we are committed to building trust, practicing humility, and walking alongside families with care and consistency.

Our staff actively listen, connect, and respond to the evolving needs of our students and their caregivers. This includes offering wraparound supports such as access to food programs, health services through the RICHER initiative, hampers for the holidays, Indigenous Enhancement Teacher and Worker, Neighbourhood Assistant, and two Youth and Family Workers. We engage in regular cycles of reflection and check-ins to ensure we are not only identifying barriers but also co-creating solutions in partnership with families and outside agencies.

Demonstrating equity in our school looks like:

- **Offering flexible meeting times and culturally safe spaces** for caregivers to engage without judgment
- **Embedding Indigenous content and pedagogy** across subject areas throughout the year
- **Using trauma-informed practices** in classroom management, recognizing behavior as communication
- **Allocating resources based on need**, not equality—ensuring that those most impacted by systemic inequities receive the support they need to be successful
- **Creating student leadership opportunities** that elevate voices from all backgrounds and foster agency.

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

The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action guide our daily work at Lord Strathcona. With 33% of our students identifying as Indigenous, we are deeply grateful for the leadership and partnership of parents, community members, and our Indigenous Enhancement Teacher and Worker.

First Peoples' Principles of Learning shape how we teach, learn, and connect. We celebrate and honor Indigenous ways of knowing through our inclusive assembly protocols and ongoing cultural practices rooted in reflection and relationship.

Our efforts align with the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement in the following ways:

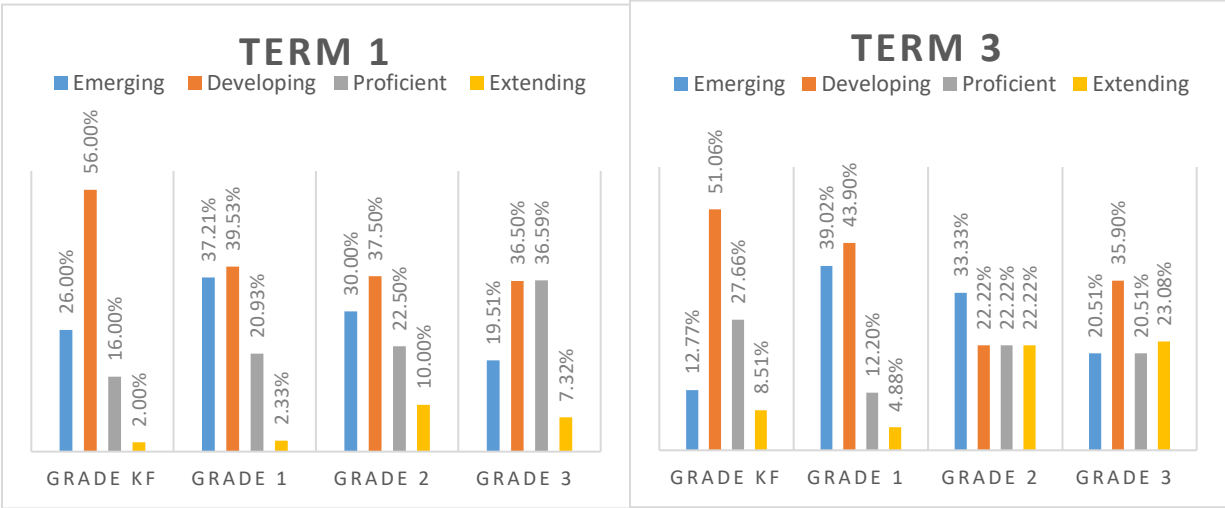
- **Belonging:** We foster pride, identity, and connection for Indigenous students.
- **Mastery:** We support Indigenous academic success from Kindergarten through Grade 12.
- **Culture & Community:** We build respect and understanding of Indigenous histories and contributions across our school, while actively addressing all forms of racism.

Each class makes a commitment to one of the Calls of Action in September and shares their learning as part of the Indigenous People's Day celebration assembly in June.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

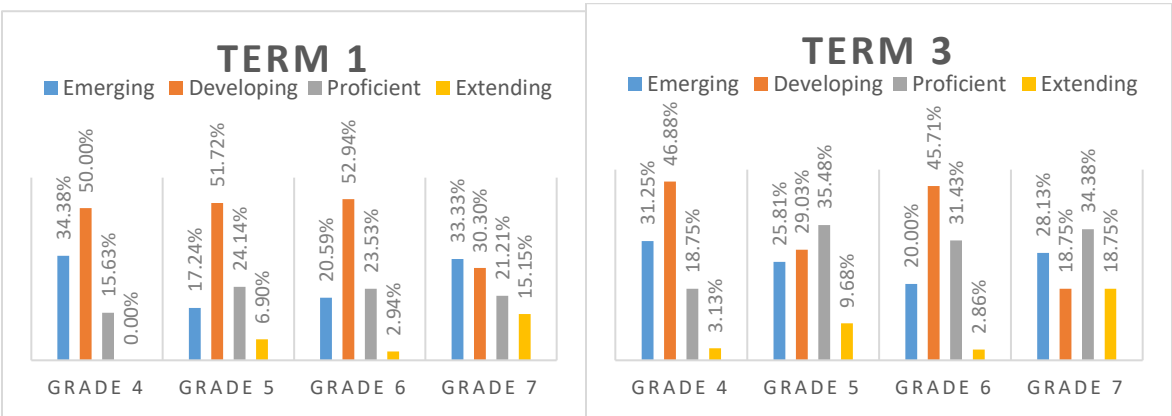
To continuously monitor the impact of our efforts, we look at a variety of data sets including Communicating Student Learning (report card) data for literacy, Student Learning Survey data, Indigenous Success Plan information, student voice, and ongoing feedback from staff and families.

Communicating Student Learning: Language Arts K-3 Data



Comparing Term 1 and Term 3 data shows that primary students made meaningful progress in their literacy learning, especially in Kindergarten and Grade 3. In these grades, more students made progress, showing growth in their literacy skills. While Grade 1 and Grade 2 showed some growth, they continue to need focused support to help build confidence and solidify foundational literacy skills. As a school, we recognize the importance of literacy building blocks at this age and continue to learn, through professional development opportunities, ways to better support vulnerable learners to ensure each student is provided with the instruction they need to be literate. Continued attention to classroom instruction, targeted interventions, and responsive teaching will help ensure all students have the opportunity to grow and succeed.

Communicating Student Learning: Language Arts 4-7 Data



From Term 1 to Term 3, students in Grades 4–7 showed encouraging growth in their literacy development. Many students moved into higher achievement levels, especially in Grades 6 and 7, where we see more students reaching *Proficient* and *Extending*. This suggests that learning experiences are helping students build stronger reading, writing, and oral language skills over time and that the instruction they received in primary years is maintained in intermediate grades. There are still opportunities to support students who are continuing to develop foundational literacy skills, particularly in Grades 4 and 5. With continued focus on engaging, explicit instruction, all students can keep growing and building confidence in their literacy learning.

As the CSL data shows, the combination of structured, explicit literacy instruction and diverse, culturally responsive content has led to meaningful gains in student achievement across K–7. By using a clear, sequential approach to phonics alongside rich texts that reflect students' identities, languages, and lived experiences, learners are not only building foundational reading and writing skills; they are also developing confidence, voice, and deeper engagement. This intentional blend of method and meaning is helping more students work towards literacy benchmarks while feeling seen, supported, and successful in their learning journey. We will continue to review and adjust our practices to ensure growth continues.