

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown is a dynamic urban elementary school in the heart of Vancouver. It opened for kindergarten to Grade Seven enrolment in September 2017 and now has 21 divisions and 475 students. We are the neighbourhood school for families living in parts of Yaletown, Chinatown, and the Downtown East Side. Our school population reflects this wonderful diversity of place. Welcoming brand new immigrants to Canada, as well as Indigenous students whose families have lived on these lands since time immemorial, Šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown is a very diverse community. There are over thirty different home languages spoken, with the most common being English, Spanish, Russian, Farsi and Korean. Forty-four percent of our students speak a home language other than English.

The Šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown community is very proud of our Hənqimənum name, Šxʷwəqʷəθət [shwa quwa set], which was gifted to us by the Musqueam Nation on March 9, 2020. Elder Larry Grant gifted the name and explained its meaning: “Šxʷwəqʷəθət references a mode of transportation used by Musqueam people whereby they caught the tide as a shortcut from False Creek to Burrard Inlet. The meaning of this name is generally translated as ‘the place from which one can catch the tide.’” Since March 2020, we have been working to honour our name, learning about its meaning, spelling and pronunciation. This is an important part of our reconciliation work.

As a school community, we want all students to feel included, respected and seen. We value care, community and kindness. We have a well-established school wide positive behaviour support program (PBIS), which forms part of our Code of Conduct and helps us explain expectations and problem solve when needed. We are the Šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown CROWS – Caring, Responsible, Optimistic, Wise and Safe. Staff and students learn and speak about being Caring CROWS as a way to these values memorable. Our CROWS matrix which sets out positive expectations, supports the social and emotional well-being of all students.

A key part of our school community are the parents and care-givers, including the active and supportive Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The Šxʷwəqʷəθət Crosstown PAC provides additional resources, such as our library book bags, events like dances, support for our wonderful Sun Run team and much more. Many parents and care-givers, including grandparents, foster parents, aunties and older siblings, can often be seen on the playground, chatting with staff and other students before and after school.

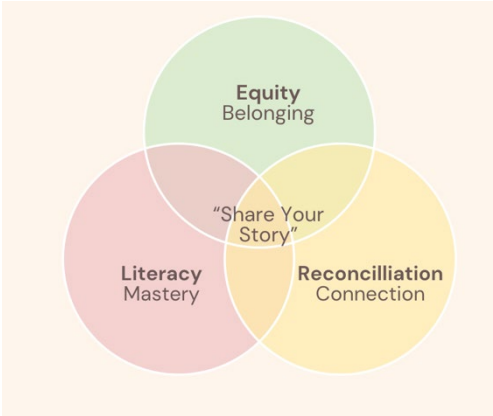
We have valued community partnerships with Vancouver Society of Childcare Centres, which runs after school care as well as summer child care on site. In addition, the Vancouver Firefighters and Backpack Buddies provide us with valuable food support throughout the year. To help support families there is after school programming such as sports, yoga and science programs. The school itself is situated adjacent to Andy Livingstone Park, a City of Vancouver park, which serves as our playground.

Our unique location allows us access to many opportunities including ready access to the seawall around False Creek. Habitat Island is within walking distance, providing outdoor learning opportunities with a small stand of trees and shoreline environments. We also have easy access to Concord Pacific Park, Chinatown, Hogan’s Alley, Dr. Sun Yat Sen Garden, and Science World. We have valued community partnerships with BC Place which allows us periodic access to their field as part of the Field of Dreams program.

The ʔxʷwəq̓wəθət Crosstown students are very enthusiastic about opportunities offered to them. The committed staff team volunteer to run a wide variety of sports teams including basketball, soccer, volleyball, badminton, track and field and cross-country. Our teams are big! More than 90 students joined the track and field team and more than 100 ran cross country this year. In addition, thanks to parent volunteers, we also have a very special Sun Run team, which, at 128 registered members, was a huge show to school pride! In addition to these athletic opportunities, many students are involved in caring for our roof top garden and annual events like our Talent Show and Terry Fox Run.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

There are 475 learners at ʔxʷwəq̓wəθət Crosstown. Of these, over twenty are Indigenous, about 30% are designated English Language Learners, with many more speaking one or more languages. In addition about 10% have a special need recognized by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The community is dynamic, with new families joining us throughout the school year. Often these families are also brand new to Canada. We know that our learners are curious, empathetic and interested in each others’ stories. We know that our students embrace leadership opportunities and have enacted several student-led initiatives, including various clubs. We value student voice.

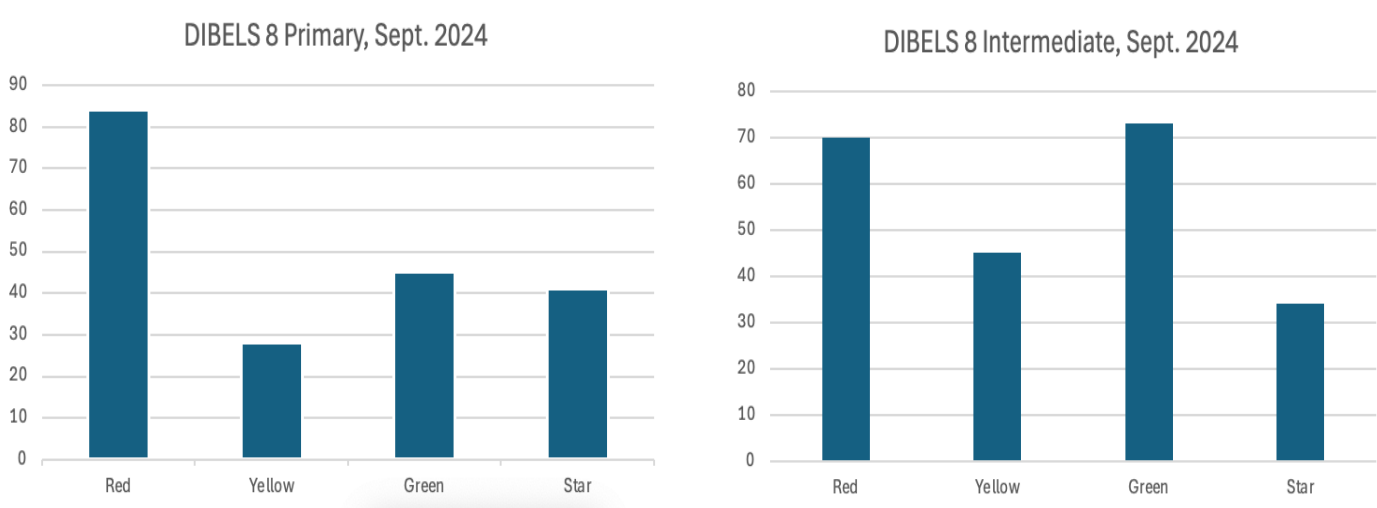


Our collective goal is to increase students’ sense of belonging by focusing on three interwoven aspects of this common goal – equity, reconciliation and literacy. We believe that our diversity is a strength and we want our learners to be able to express themselves and feel a sense of belonging within this community. We use the phrase “Share Your Story” to express this goal and as celebration of individuality and literacy within community.

In order to learn more about our learners from the learners themselves, we conduct interviews with five randomly selected learners from each division. We ask students to name adults they believe care about them. This question helps us understand students’ sense of belonging and care within the school community.

In order to understand our students’ perspective on reconciliation and their role in it, in the spring, we ask each student to complete a form answering the following questions: What do you know about Indigenous peoples and cultures (contributions, stories, history, traditions, language etc)? How do you think learning about Indigenous people connects to your own life? What do you wonder about Indigenous people in our community, our country or the world? We carefully consider students’ answers to these questions to help us plan our next steps in reconciliation.

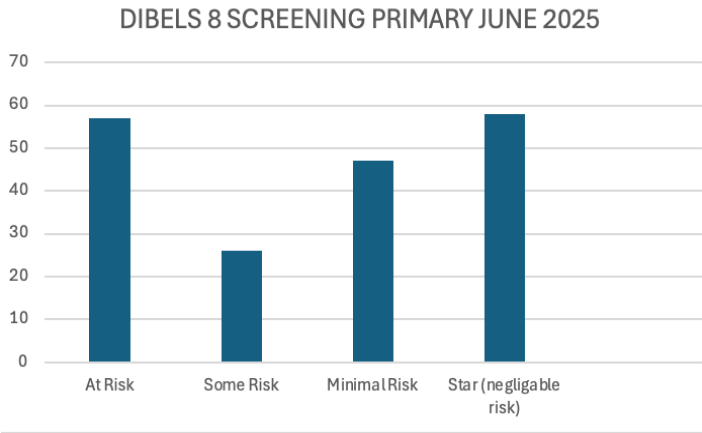
In order to better understand students’ literacy skills, specifically reading, we will be completing DIBELS 8 assessments for students three times per year (Gr 1-7 in Sept, Jan, June; Kindergarten in January and June). This information will help us tailor supports and track progress. The results below are from September 2024 for Primary classes (Grades 1,2,3) and Intermediate classes (Grades 4,5,6,7). Green and Star indicate no concerns reading skills developing on track. Red and yellow indicate at risk.



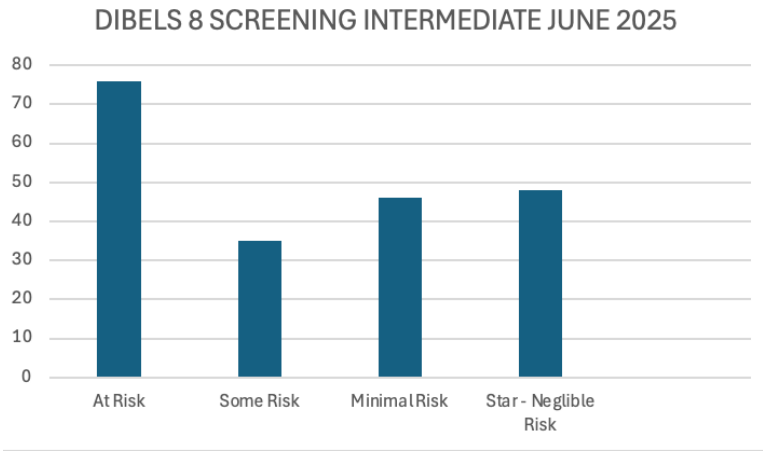
AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING TO:

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

This year we used the DIBELS screening tool three times (September, January, June) to assess all students’ literacy skills. We used this data to target support and adapt instruction to target specific skills, for example reading fluency. The data indicate that overall scores increased for all learners, meaning that all learners made progress in their literacy skills over the course of the year.



Furthermore, there was a reduction of the number of primary students (Grade 1,2,3) at risk of reading challenges, down from 58% in September to 44% in June. Significantly, the percentage of students scoring at the “Star” level, indicating the strongest reading skills, increased from 20% to 31% of all primary students.

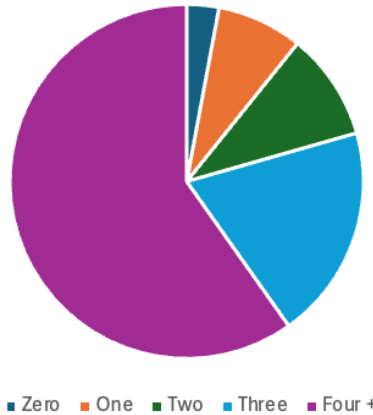


The improvements in results for intermediate students (Grade 4,5,6,7) were much smaller, with 54% of students continuing to be at risk or at some risk for reading challenges. The difference may be due in part to the increasing demands of comprehension, a skill which is very affected by English language abilities and takes longer to see improvements. Furthermore, it is important to note that the DIBELS is a screener for reading, rather than an in-depth assessment tool. Other aspects of the Language Arts curriculum, such as writing and oral language, are not part of the DIBELS screener. Regardless, the results indicate that intermediate reading skills will continue to be an instructional focus.

Improve Equity

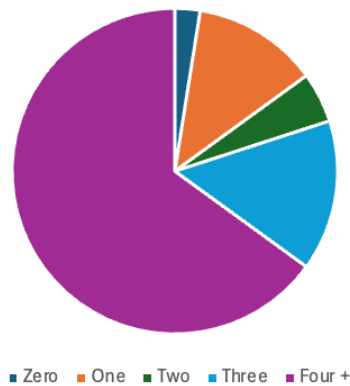
We view our wonderful diversity as a strength and try to make sure everyone feels welcome and a sense of belonging within our community. Each year, we ask five randomly selected students from each division a series questions including *Can you name adults at school who care about you?* We are interested to see how connected students feel to a variety of staff members. This year, there was an increase of students who named four or more different adults, evidence of a sense of belonging.

Names Adults at School Who Care About Me



As we have many students who come from different countries and speak different home languages, as well as several students who join us part way through the school year, it is important to see if this sense of belonging is felt equally amongst the students. For students speak a language other than English at home (by self-report), the results were very similar, with a slight *increase* in the number of students naming four or more adults who care about them, indicating an equitable sense of belonging.

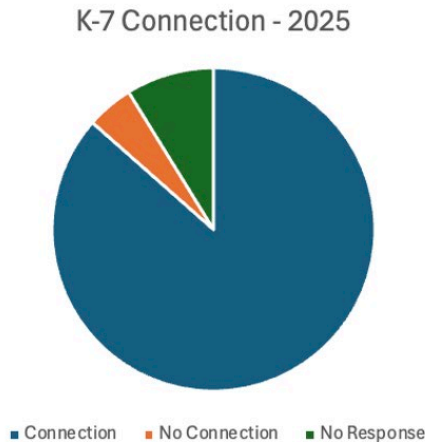
Among Students Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home
Names Adults at School Who Care About Me



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

Our reconciliation journey involves daily classroom practice as well as special events. We infuse teaching and learning with the First Nations Principles of Learning. Each year we ask all students to tell us what they know about Indigenous cultures, histories and traditions, what they wonder, and how this connects with their own life. The vast majority of our students are able to articulate

a way that they are connected to Indigenous cultures, histories and traditions. Some of these connections include attending a school with a hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ name, living on unceded territory, connecting with traditions like drumming, and being themselves Indigenous.



Some specific things we do to foster this connection include student Indigenous acknowledgements, school wide celebration of National Indigenous People’s Day through playing music, and teaching by Elder Marr from the Carnegie Centre for one class. Also, our library has a strong collection of books by Indigenous authors. In addition, all teachers weave Indigenous content and ways of knowing within many subject areas including language arts, mathematics and science.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE’RE ON TRACK?

As student voice is integral to a sense of belonging and the goal of “Share Your Story”, we plan to continue to learn directly from students about how we are doing. This includes using a reading screening tool three times per year for Grade One to Grade Seven. We will use this data to continue to refine our literacy supports and teaching practices. In addition, we plan to continue to speak with five randomly selected students from each class to learn about their sense of belonging and how they feel about their own learning. Asking all students about their understanding, questions and connection to Indigenous cultures, traditions and histories will also continue. This information helps us understand where we are on our reconciliation journey.