

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

University Hill Elementary School, located in Pacific Spirit Park near Acadia Beach and the University of British Columbia (UBC), is a Kindergarten to Grade 7 school with a population of 382 students. *We are honoured to work, learn, and play on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) Nation.*

The student population is composed of permanent residents in the catchment, as well as children of UBC employees, students, and visiting professors. It includes English Language Learners, as well as International and Indigenous students. Many of the students are multi-lingual and the school population has 33 different home languages. The cultural diversity of the school lends itself to meaningful, cultural learning. We are very proud of the diversity that exists in and enriches the school community and are committed to creating an inclusive environment.

Generally, the students have well developed background knowledge and are familiar with adult negotiated conversations and ask a lot of questions. The parents are actively involved in the education of their children and have high expectations for academic achievement.

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is very active with an elected executive that is committed to providing amazing opportunities for the students. The PAC holds parent education sessions on various pertinent topics and spearheads initiatives throughout the year to not only help support the learning of the students, but also the families in the school community. Volunteers are plentiful in the school and students benefit from the many learning opportunities and the sense of community.

The school offers unique learning spaces for students. Located in Pacific Spirit Park, University Hill Elementary School has direct access to a network of trails in the forest, a freshwater salmon stream, and Acadia Beach. We have two outdoor classrooms with large rocks arranged in a circle. These spaces are used to help facilitate class meetings, drama activities, cooperative games, and other activities. We have a Ready Bodies Learning Minds space, five small breakout spaces, and a calming room. As a school we recognize that students learn differently, and these spaces help provide students with the opportunity to regulate and be better prepared to learn.

The school also has an All Nations Room. This room is a breakout space for the Indigenous learners, a space for the Indigenous Education worker, and for Indigenous cultural teachings. We have a redesigned library, which is a modern learning space with flexible furniture, open space, large whiteboards for ideation, and technology to support inquiry-based learning. The diverse learning spaces are conducive to place-based learning, self-regulation, and implementation of an

inquiry model of teaching and learning. Students are invited to ask curious questions to drive their learning and understanding of the world. The teachers provide opportunities for students to refine their questions to engage students in making observations, predictions, creating and testing hypotheses, and using a variety of language skills to communicate understandings. They also provide opportunities for the students to participate in a variety of school programs, clubs and sports, such as cooking classes, Drama and Student Council, and Cross Country, Volleyball, Basketball, Rugby, and Track and Field, for example.

The proximity of the school to UBC and downtown Vancouver provides easy access to extension opportunities at educational venues, as well as mentorship opportunities. This creates a multitude of unique conversations and learning opportunities. Mentors have included faculty from the Faculty of Education/Outdoor Education and Biodiversity Genetics Department at UBC, as well as a former Canadian World Cup Soccer player. Community partners include the Vancouver Public Library, Pacific Spirit Coastal Health, University Endowment Lands, and various organizations at UBC.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

The students at University Hill Elementary School are engaged with their learning and enjoy being at school. They eagerly participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities provided throughout the year, including Cross-Country, Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton, Track and Field, and the Rugby and Drama Clubs. The students are also actively involved in taking on leadership opportunities and making positive contributions to our school (e.g. Library and Daily Announcements Monitors, Assembly Leaders, Student Council). Based on data obtained from last year's Student Learning Survey (SLS), they also believe our school is a welcoming and safe community. *79% of Gr. 4 and 87% of Gr. 7 students feel welcome at school most of the time or all of the time, while 84% of Gr. 4 and 91% of Gr. 7 students feel safe at school most of the time or all of the time.*

Data from last year's Learning Updates also reveals that the students possess very strong numeracy skills.

Mathematics Written Learning Update Data			
	Term 1	Term2	Term 3
Emerging	3 %	3 %	3 %
Developing	22 %	18 %	14 %
Proficient	54 %	57 %	55 %
Extending	16 %	20 %	26%

*The above graph shows excellent progress in the year. In **Term 1**: 70% of school is Proficient/Extending; **Term 2**: 77% of the school Proficient/Extending; and in **Term 3**: 81% of the school Proficient/Extending.*

Data also indicates that many of the students are on track with their literacy skills.

English Language Arts Written Learning Update Data			
	Term 1	Term2	Term 3
Emerging	10 %	9 %	7 %
Developing	43 %	40 %	35 %
Proficient	37 %	40 %	45 %
Extending	5 %	8 %	12 %

*The above graph shows in **Term 1**: 43% of the school Developing and 42% Proficient/Extending; **Term 2**: 40% of the school Developing and 48% Proficient/Extending; **Term 3**: 35% of the school Developing and 57% Proficient/Extending)*

This data is further reflected in SLS responses, where students expressed that they are continuing to improve in math, reading, and writing (72% of Gr. 4 and 72% of Gr. 7 students feel they continue to get better at math; 66% of Gr. 4 and 77% of Gr. 7 students feel they continue to get better at reading; 68% of Gr.4 and 83% of Gr. 7 students feel they continue to get better at writing). However, there are still some students who are not yet consistently proficient in English Language Arts (**Term 1**: 10% of school Emerging; **Term 2**: 9% of school Emerging; **Term 3**: 7% of school Emerging). Therefore, as a staff our goal is to determine how we can best support these students who are emerging to strengthen their literacy skills. The students and staff have also identified that learning can be impacted by social-emotional challenges.

In addition to literacy and numeracy, the students at University Hill Elementary School continue to engage in activities which foster a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history. For example, students write their own land acknowledgments, explore place-based learning through regularly scheduled outdoor learning opportunities, and participate in Orange Shirt Day and Red Dress Day. Even though the students have shown growth in developing a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history, feedback from the SLS suggests they may not always be aware when they are learning about Indigenous peoples so we need to make their learning more explicit (48% of Gr. 4 students and 55% of Gr. 7 students feel they are learning about Indigenous Peoples at school most of the time or all of the time).

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

Because anecdotal data and information obtained from the SLS and teacher led surveys the previous year revealed the students needed to develop a deeper sense of belonging and their social-emotional skills, this was what we worked on in the 2023-2024 school year. To develop the students' deeper sense of belonging, Student Council organized a variety of events to build a sense of community, and to create a positive, welcoming, and inclusive school environment (e.g. theme days, and movies, face painting, dance party, and sports activities during Magic Mondays).

We also formed a Community and Belonging Committee, which coordinated a week-long series of activities connected to our Code of Conduct (Be Kind to Yourself, Be Kind to Each Other, Be Kind to This Place, Hold One Another Up). Student-led assemblies were also held every month to acknowledge and celebrate the wonderful learning and fantastic activities that took place at our school. During these assemblies, students shared, for example, projects they worked on, sports teams and field trips they participated in, and actions they took to follow our Code of Conduct.

While we were encouraged to see that the majority of the students reported a sense of belonging as a result of these initiatives, data from last year's SLS also showed that there were still a significant number of students who did not yet feel connected (*64% of Gr. 4 and 64% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school most of the time or all of the time; 27% of Gr. 4 and 25% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school sometimes*). This tells us that while our efforts to create an inclusive and welcoming environment are having an impact, there is more work to do. Consequently, our goal this year has been to continue to deepen implementation of these initiatives and to further enhance the students' sense of belonging.

To develop the students' social-emotional skills, we incorporated our Code of Conduct into various facets of the school last year (e.g. daily morning announcements, school-wide assemblies and events, including Be Kind to Each Other and Be Kind to This Place week). The students were also provided the opportunity to refine their social-emotional skills through leadership opportunities, such as being Library and Daily Announcements Monitors, Assembly Leaders, and part of Student Council, for example. Most importantly, established social-emotional programs were explicitly taught to them and intertwined in activities throughout the curriculum, and they also received targeted lessons focusing on the big ideas and curricular competencies from the Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum.

Although students showed growth, both they and the staff recognized that social-emotional challenges can affect learning. Therefore, in order to further expand their social-emotional skills, we have continued to implement the aforementioned practices with the addition of the staff exploring the use of a common and consistent social-emotional program at both the primary and intermediate levels and providing more lessons focusing on the PHE curriculum this year.

Improve equity

Although last year's Learning Updates showed that many University Hill Elementary students are on track with literacy skills, they also showed there are some students who are not yet proficient in English Language Arts. The literacy and equity focus this year has been to decrease the achievement gap for students in literacy at University Hill. To determine how we can best support these students, this year, we will collaborate and engage in professional development discussions about instructional and intervention strategies, and resources to enhance the students' literacy skills (e.g. assessment to inform and guide instruction; consistent and cohesive writing, and phonics and reading comprehension instruction at the primary and intermediate levels; intervention strategies/learning support).

We are also committed to creating an inclusive school community that promotes respect for diversity. The students and staff will develop and demonstrate a sense of empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminating actions.

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

We have been working to support the students in developing a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history:

- Embedded Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into all curricular areas
- Indigenous Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of daily morning announcements, assemblies, formal meetings, and other events
- Embedded Musqueam knowledge into our Code of Conduct and using it as a framework to guide our practice
- Explored place-based learning through regularly scheduled outdoor learning opportunities
- Created two outdoor learning spaces, which include a circle of 12 stones to provide seating for a class of students to explore the power of using a circle for sharing, medicine wheel teachings, and other aspects of Indigenous culture
- Planned field trips to The Museum of Anthropology and Reconciliation Pole
- Collaborated with our Indigenous Education Worker to develop learning opportunities for students and staff on Indigenous themes
- Participated in National Truth and Reconciliation Day, Orange Shirt Day, Red Dress Day, and National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Purchased books and resources with Indigenous authors, illustrators, and information to support teaching and learning

Embedding these initiatives and practices into the fabric of the school has contributed significantly to the growth of the students having a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history. We will continue implementing these practices and seek other ways to enhance student learning, especially by explicitly highlighting lessons on Indigenous peoples to strengthen their knowledge and understanding.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

As we reflect on our progress toward this year's school goals, we can see areas of success, as well as areas where we still have work to do. Our work on fostering a greater sense of belonging among the students was very encouraging. The initiatives we implemented, ranging from Magic Mondays hosted by Student Council to student-led monthly assemblies to extra-curricular activities, including sports teams and various clubs, had a noticeable impact. This is supported by the results of the SLS this year, which showed an overall increase in students reporting that they feel a sense of belonging at school in comparison to last year.

Is school a place where you feel like you belong?					
2024 - 2025			2023 - 2024		
	Gr. 4	Gr. 7		Gr. 4	Gr. 7
Sometimes	7 %	13 %	Sometimes	27 %	25 %
Most of the Time	52 %	46 %	Most of the Time	43 %	33 %
All of the Time	32 %	26 %	All of the Time	21 %	31 %

The above graph shows:

2024-2025 SLS: 84% of Gr. 4 and 72% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school most of the time or all of the time, 7% of Gr. 4 and 13% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school sometimes, VS

2023-2024 SLS: 64% of Gr. 4 and 64% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school most of the time or all of the time, 27% of Gr. 4 and 25% of Gr. 7 students feel they belong at school sometimes

Our equity goal, particularly around reducing discrimination and promoting respect for diversity, also yielded positive results. School-wide education, including the implementation of social-emotional programs and more lessons focusing on the PHE curriculum, the reinforcement of our School Code of Conduct in various facets of the school, and workshops taught to the students and staff by District Staff, for example, helped strengthen a culture of respect and safety. This was reflected in the results from this year's SLS (52% of Gr. 4 and 88% of Gr. 7 students feel students treat each other with respect most of the time or all of the time; 87% of Gr. 4 and 81% of Gr. 7 students feel safe at school most of the time or all of the time).

However, when it comes to decreasing the achievement gap for students in literacy, a comparison of the Learning Updates from this year and last year indicates little change. The data shows that a large number of the students at University Hill are on track with their literacy skills, but there are still some students who continue to not be consistently proficient in English Language Arts.

English Language Arts			
2024 - 2025		2023 - 2024	
	Term 3		Term 3
Emerging	8 %	Emerging	7 %
Developing	37 %	Developing	35 %
Proficient	44 %	Proficient	45 %
Extending	10 %	Extending	12 %

The above graph shows:

2024-2025 Term 3: 37% of school Developing, 54% of school Proficient/Extending, 8% of school Emerging, VS.

2023-2024 Term 3: 35% of school Developing, 57% of school Proficient/Extending, 7% of school Emerging. Similarly, our work around reconciliation did not result in significant changes. Even though we continued to embed initiatives and practices into the fabric of our school to support the students in developing a deeper appreciation and understanding of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history, including making it more explicit to the students when they are learning about Indigenous peoples, the data from the SLS suggests we have yet to make meaningful progress in this area.

At school, are you learning about Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Metis)?					
2024 - 2025			2023 - 2024		
	Gr. 4	Gr. 7		Gr. 4	Gr. 7
Sometimes	52 %	35 %	Sometimes	43 %	35 %
Most of the Time	30 %	46 %	Most of the Time	35 %	35 %
All of the Time	12 %	6 %	All of the Time	13 %	20 %

The above graph shows:

(2024-2025 SLS: 42% of Gr. 4 students and 52% of Gr. 7 students feel they are learning about Indigenous Peoples at school most of the time or all of the time, VS

2023-2024 SLS: 48% of Gr. 4 students and 55% of Gr. 7 students feel they are learning about Indigenous Peoples at school most of the time or all of the time

As we look forward to the upcoming school year, we will continue to implement and build on the initiatives and practices that have brought positive results, particularly in fostering a sense of belonging among students and in our efforts to reduce discrimination and promote respect for diversity. At the same time, we recognize that there are areas where we still have work to do. We will continue to focus on narrowing the achievement gap in literacy and on deepening the students' understanding and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge, culture, and history. We will continue to work towards creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment for the students at University Hill.