

2024-2025

School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Dr. George M. Weir Elementary School is situated on 44th Street East between Killarney and Rupert Streets. This site enjoys close proximity to the Killarney Community Centre, which includes the recently added Champlain Seniors Centre, as well as Killarney Secondary School. Many of our families have always been very involved in activities offered at the Community Centre.

Typically, many of our students complete their entire elementary school years at Weir, as did their older siblings, and even some of their parents. However, over the past several years, we have welcomed growing numbers of families that are immigrating to Canada from other countries including Vietnam, Iran, Philippines, China, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Mexico and many more. Most grade seven students attend Killarney Secondary when they graduate from Weir. It is very typical for these graduates to regularly return to Weir to visit staff, volunteer for school functions, or play basketball. Additionally, many of the grandparents of our students participate in morning exercise programs on the Weir site under our covered area including Tai Chi, aerobics, and Hackey Sac. Generational connections at Weir are deeply rooted within our larger community.

The home languages represented are predominantly English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, with Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, and Punjabi also represented. Many of these students receive ELL support. We continuously seek opportunities to welcome these rich home cultures into our school. Students with a Ministry Designation who have an IEP are fully integrated at all grade levels, some with support from our student support staff.

Weir is committed to both the academic and holistic, socio-emotional development of all students. We strive to provide a supportive learning environment where students demonstrate social, emotional, and academic growth. We value student agency and enjoy creating opportunities for school-wide leadership. We also recognize that school is an important part of a larger community that nurtures and supports our learners as they grow. Our aim is for the entire Weir community to feel connected to our school and feel that they can participate and contribute in ways that highlight and nurture their unique identities and strengths.

Since returning to our rebuilt site in November of 2022, we have adopted the learning community model. Our school is divided into learning communities by similar grade groupings. The staff within each community is provided with weekly release time to collaborate. A large part of this collaborative time is dedicated to our school goals. This model is guided by research that consistently shows the most significant impact on student achievement at school is through staff collaboration.

Weir is a digitally enhanced school, allowing students to thrive in this digital age. Grades K to 3 have access to school iPads. Grades 4 to 7 not only have access to school iPads but can bring their own mobile devices to school. Students are provided opportunities to engage with the B.C. Curriculum by designing and creating projects of their own. Weir has developed an inclusive program that allows students to engage in personalized inquiry-based learning. Each year, online curriculum opportunities for students to access at school and home (e.g. Mathletics, Raz Kids) have been available, which many parents have come to appreciate.

Typically, our parent community has been active and present in the daily happenings at Weir. Since last fall when we returned to our newly rebuilt school, we have made great efforts to revive many of the past activities and practices with our parents through our PAC council. Their ongoing, meaningful support contributes greatly to the positive school climate and enriches the school experience for all students and their families, and staff members. Their dedication is admirable, and their participation plays an important role in the cultural fabric of our community. We have worked hard to further increase our parent involvement in our school and have looked to better reflect the home cultures of our diverse population. Recently, a group of South Asian parents organized our first Vaisakhi and Diwali celebrations at Weir. These were very exciting events that brought many community members together. Our PAC has also organized many new events including book exchanges and intermural sports.

Further, we have brought some practices back from the past that supported our students and families including:

- Morning homework club where students are provided a quiet space and supervision to work on their assignments.
- Family reading mornings in our library commons.
- Chess club where intermediate students gather to play chess over several lunch times per week.

We continue to seek new and creative ways to include our families in our daily activities and events at school. Further, we continue to emphasize and highlight the rich diversity of our students through cultural events, monthly assemblies, and schoolwide literacy activities. The impact of these efforts is evidenced by the conversations and vocabulary that our students use with their teachers and classmates.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

At Weir, our students have always shown a deep love for learning and a curiosity about the world around them. They are enthusiastic about new concepts and opportunities, attentive to their studies, and driven by growth and achievement. Our teachers hold high expectations for our students as readers and writers, resulting in literacy experiences that are comprehensive, responsive, and dynamic.

This spring, we conducted a literacy survey that yielded insightful results. Over 75% of our students expressed a desire to read more. When asked what they wanted their teachers to know about them as readers, many students highlighted the value of reading (e.g., “I like reading because you get smart”) and the importance of skills that aid comprehension (e.g., “sometimes I skip words but I still understand”). While our fall assessments show that some young readers are

still developing foundational reading skills, we remain committed to fostering a culture of reading and supporting these early learners. To further nurture a love of reading, we are introducing open reading mornings before school, allowing students to use our library independently, with their families, or with their buddies.

Weir is proud of its wonderfully diverse school community. Our students come from various backgrounds and speak many home languages. Each year, we welcome more families who have recently immigrated to Canada from countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Ukraine, and several South American nations. We highly value incorporating our students' home cultures into school activities. Many students and families volunteer for cultural events, such as the Lion Dance during Lunar New Year and our recent Vaisakhi celebration. Additionally, more grade seven students are requesting to have their cultural names included on their elementary school leaving certificates.

Our intermediate students demonstrate a strong sense of agency through volunteer work both inside and outside the classroom. They participate in assembly crews, host morning announcements, and serve as hall, lunch, and equipment monitors. Our students are also passionate social advocates and allies. A recent student learning survey revealed that our grade four and seven students place high value on diversity and are keen to learn about human rights. In recent years, student-run fundraisers have supported victims of natural disasters and international conflicts. There is also a growing interest in Indigenous education and Pride month.

Our staff prioritize connecting with each student individually. Surveys consistently show that Weir students feel they have trusted adults at school who care about them and believe in their success, with results significantly above the district average. Students also report feeling included and welcome at school. However, a recent survey indicated that students are unclear about what is expected of them, despite staff observations of their politeness and good behavior. Clarifying expectations will be a focus area for us. Additionally, while students have made significant progress in mental health care, grade seven students still report feeling anxious at school. We will continue to incorporate mindfulness strategies into our morning announcements and monthly assemblies.

Our students join us on our reconciliation journey, learning to pronounce the names of the three host nations correctly and taking opportunities to acknowledge the land and share their personal connections. We look forward to creating personalized land acknowledgements this fall. Many students are passionate about addressing past wrongs related to residential schools in Canada. They take turns using our Indigenous drums during monthly assemblies and learn Indigenous songs shared publicly or gifted through ceremony. Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are integrated throughout our curriculum and visible in every classroom.

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

The integration of core competencies throughout Weir School fosters a supportive and cohesive learning environment where students actively engage in personal growth. We will continue embedding these competencies into morning announcements, monthly assemblies, and daily lessons, ensuring that students regularly reflect on their goals and deepen their understanding. Maintaining visibility in classrooms and common spaces keeps core competencies at the forefront, encouraging students to recognize their progress and take ownership of their learning. Weekly collaboration time within our school learning communities will remain a priority, reinforcing the shared commitment of educators and students to a culture of learning and development.

We will also continue displaying school-wide core competency goals and strategies by having students write them on leaves and placing them on a communal tree in a central location. This initiative not only celebrates individual achievements but also fosters a strong sense of belonging and support. The daily presence of these leaves serves as a continuous reminder, promoting reflection and accountability. To enhance this practice, we aim to implement weekly school-wide check-ins, creating opportunities for students to connect with their goals more intentionally and engage in meaningful reflection throughout the term.

Weir School remains committed to enhancing literacy instruction by continuing evidence-based strategies that support reading and writing development. We will strengthen vocabulary development, sentence structure, reading comprehension, fluency, and oral communication, empowering students to become confident and expressive learners. Primary classrooms will continue UFLI, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty, Daily Read-Alouds, Guided Reading Groups, Readers Theatre, and Adriene Gear's Reading Power and Powerful Writing, ensuring students engage meaningfully while refining essential literacy skills. We will continue the Blitz, intensive short-term phonics instruction, ensuring students who need extra support in the spring receive targeted interventions. Foundational literacy techniques will remain central to early learning, providing students with the tools needed to build strong phonemic awareness.

Each year, we conduct school-wide assessments of our students' literacy abilities using the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills) measures to direct our instruction and monitor growth. We use the data to both skills areas and grade areas that might need targeted intervention throughout the year. During the 2024/25 school year, we targeted a portion of our grade three and four students in our literacy blitz with daily, small group instruction for six-week intervals. We measured their skill at both the beginning and end of the blitz with significant growth in letter/sound recognition (42%) and decoding (25%).

In intermediate classrooms, literacy instruction will encompass literacy circles, novel studies, story and essay writing, and presentation skills, offering deeper opportunities for analytical thinking and creativity. Across all grade levels, The Five Pillars of Literacy will continue to guide instruction, promoting critical thinking and comprehensive literacy development. Moving

forward, we aim to strengthen collaboration among educators to ensure literacy instruction is cohesive, effectively aligned, and responsive to student growth.

When comparing our CSL (Communicating Student Learning) data from 2023/24 to 2024/24 fall and spring reports for grade four and seven students, we noticed impressive growth in the number of students who were at proficient and/or extending levels of proficiency (increase of 56%).

Beyond structured literacy instruction, we will continue building a culture of reading that fosters a love for literature throughout the school community. Ongoing initiatives such as daily read-aloud, buddy reading, school wide read-alouds, open library mornings, and PAC book exchanges provide students with opportunities to interact with books in engaging ways. To further enrich reading experiences, we aim to expand school-wide reading events, including Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) sessions, a Read-a-Thon to encourage independent reading, and a student book club that promotes discussion and exploration of diverse literature. By maintaining successful programs and introducing new recommendations, we aim to foster a school-wide reading culture that inspires lifelong literacy engagement.

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Improve equity

To continue improving equity at our school, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that celebrates and reflects the rich cultural diversity of our students and their families. Staff have emphasized the importance of recognizing and participating in a wide range of cultural celebrations such as Vaisakhi, Diwali, and Lunar New Year, and incorporating these into both classroom and school-wide activities. By inviting community elders and diverse speakers into our classrooms, we create meaningful opportunities for students to share their backgrounds, languages, and traditions. We will also continue to have school-wide read alouds at our monthly assembly that highlights diversity, equity, and inclusion themes. These experiences not only validate students' identities but also help build empathy and understanding among peers. Additional activities are provided after these events to help reinforce the sharing and learning.

Equity also means ensuring that all students see themselves represented in the curriculum and school environment. Staff will continue to expand classroom and school library collections to include diverse texts that reflect the cultures and experiences of our students. Some possible initiatives such as sending out family surveys at the beginning of the year to learn about important holidays and traditions, incorporating cultural stories and artifacts into lessons, hosting multicultural days or heritage fairs, and highlighting different ways of saying "hello" during assemblies to help ensure that cultural diversity is acknowledged and celebrated year-round. By

embedding these practices into our school culture, we aim to create a more inclusive and equitable learning experience for every student.

As a school, a lunch program has been incorporated where a hot, nutritionally balanced meal is provided for students in need. In our classrooms, staff will continue to implement Universal Classroom Supports as well as Essential Classroom Supports to ensure the learning and emotional needs of students are met, while also continuing to expand our toolkits.

An important measure that we pay particular attention to at Weir is how many students feel they have more than one adult at school who cares about them and believes in their success. While we continue to keep this as an area of focus, we notice that higher numbers of Weir students (77%) consistently report this important connection to adults over the district average (61%). While this connection is important for all students, we will continue to pay particular attention to those students who belong to equity-deserving groups.

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

Our reconciliation goals are grounded in fostering a deep respect for and understanding of Indigenous cultures through storytelling and cultural perspectives. We are committed to preserving and honoring Indigenous stories, languages, and traditions by thoughtfully integrating them into our learning environments. Practices such as talking circles and the use of talking sticks help create inclusive spaces where students and educators engage in meaningful dialogue. These methods promote mutual learning, empathy, and connection, allowing children to share their stories and build deeper, more authentic relationships.

We aim to move beyond trauma-focused narratives by emphasizing the beauty, strength, and diversity of Indigenous cultures and histories. Our approach supports positive representation and encourages self-reflection among students and staff. By recognizing personal biases and engaging in ongoing learning, we nurture personal growth and a stronger sense of community. We believe in 'braiding' people and stories together highlighting the collective journey of learning, listening, and healing through story.

To support this vision, we advocate for more time spent in circles, fostering trust and reflection, and ensuring that Indigenous wisdom and traditions are meaningfully honored within our curriculum.

Learning Community Implementation

In the upcoming school year, each Learning Community will engage in unique goals centered around storytelling and Indigenous cultural perspectives:

- **Owl Community (Grades 6–7):** Students will interview family members to explore and share their cultural backgrounds orally, preserving traditions through personal storytelling.
- **Otter Community (Grades 4–6):** Students will connect with the land, explore Indigenous ways of knowing, and participate in traditional games that highlight joy, resilience, and cultural celebration.
- **Wolf Community (Grades 2–3):** Guided by the First Peoples Principles of Learning, students will engage in storytelling that deepens their connection to self, place, and community.
- **Hummingbird Community (Grades 1–2):** Daily morning circles using a talking stick will establish routine, build community, and promote emotional safety and expression.
- **Turtle Community (Kindergarten):** Through developmentally appropriate experiences, students will explore the 7 Principles of Indigenous Storywork—Respect, Responsibility, Reverence, Reciprocity, Holism, Interrelatedness, and Synergy—laying the foundation for early cultural understanding

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Progress in literacy will be monitored through targeted assessments and instructional strategies. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills) and Benchmarks (whole book assessments of reader fluency and comprehension) provide valuable insights, helping educators tailor support and enhance learning. School-wide writes build consistency in writing skills, while CSL (Communicating Student Learning) and FSA (Foundation Skill Assessments) results will track achievement and align with educational goals. These combined efforts effectively monitor growth, refine instruction, and strengthen literacy across all grades.

Progress will be monitored through student learning surveys, anecdotal conversations, observational data, regular check-ins, CSL data, and student feedback, ensuring regular reflection and accountability as we move forward together on this path of Truth and Reconciliation, Core Competency Goals and Equity.