



2025-2026

School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, the Cunningham community is honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwataʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Cunningham Elementary School was first opened in 1959 as an annex to Norquay Main School and was originally named Norquay School Annex. After the building was expanded to meet the growing population, it was officially reopened in November 1966 and named G.T. Cunningham Elementary School. George T. Cunningham (1889 – 1965) was a lifelong resident and businessman of Vancouver who was honoured for his philanthropy, public service, and dedication to education. His family continues to volunteer and be active, highly valued members of our school community.

Cunningham is a vibrant and welcoming learning community that prioritizes student social-emotional and physical well-being combined with academic success. We have empathetic learners who understand that everyone has different skills and abilities. With a student population of approximately 400, our school site and playground serve as a cornerstone for the community.

A dedicated staff work together to provide a well-rounded education for all students. Staff work to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for all, to ensure that every student can thrive academically, emotionally and socially. The staff are working to support students in building independence and resiliency. At Cunningham Elementary, student well-being is of utmost importance. We strive to create a safe and nurturing environment where students can flourish. Our holistic approach to education emphasizes physical activity, social responsibility, and academic excellence. Our students are encouraged to be curious learners, authentic individuals, respectful towards others, and enthusiastic about their education.

We have a strong emphasis on community service by our students. Various leadership opportunities also arise during the year and include assembly emcees, student announcers, and library monitors. The majority of our students, upon completing grade 7, attend Gladstone Secondary. Cunningham alumni return regularly to see their former teachers and other staff that were here when they were students.

Diversity and inclusion are celebrated at Cunningham Elementary, where we embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of each learner. We are in a neighbourhood with multi-generational families. Some parents of current students attended Cunningham themselves when they were students. Our diverse student body includes a significant English Language Learner (ELL) population. Approximately fifty

percent of our student population identifies an additional language, other than English, spoken at home.

Parent involvement is highly valued at Cunningham Elementary, and we have the privilege of having caring and involved parents who actively contribute to the school community. The strong relationships between home and school are nurtured and maintained, ensuring a collaborative and supportive educational experience. Cunningham is fortunate to have an engaged Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Some PAC initiatives include creating a pumpkin patch in the courtyard and a book giveaway, where every student receives books to read at the end of the school year. These initiatives make a big impact in building a sense of community at our school. The PAC strengthens the bond between the school and the community, providing parents with a platform to actively contribute to the school's activities. This collaboration fosters a sense of partnership and ensures that parents' voices are heard and valued.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and many speak a language other than English at home. They are eager and willing to learn and engage in outdoor learning opportunities with enthusiasm. Students are engaged by the hands-on learning opportunities in the courtyard space and garden beds. They are respectful, friendly, and caring. Students are willing to persevere in their learning even when it's difficult, and they are proud of their accomplishments. Our students embrace the arts. They are provided with opportunities to explore and create with a variety of mediums. This year, all of the classes participated in the AIRS (Artist in Residence) program and they had the opportunity to work with an artist to create water-themed installations. There is also a high engagement in clubs, both at lunch and after school. Students take part in extracurricular activities when they are offered such as Cricut and knitting, as well as basketball, ultimate, volleyball, and badminton. Cunningham students are enthusiastic, encouraging, and welcoming when we have new students who join our community.

For the last two years, the staff have looked at data and engaged in many discussions around student learning. We discussed strategies of teaching using a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. When we teach using a UDL approach, we are enabling all students to access the curriculum and increase their sense of belonging. Our hope was that a UDL approach to teaching would increase literacy scores. We compared the written updates data for Language Arts from March 2025 to March 2026. By focusing on oral language during this school year, we were hoping to see an improvement in the overall literacy of our students. The staff decided to work on improving the oral language and reading abilities of our students. The focus on strengthening oral language should also be reflected in students' ability to read and write.

Based on the Written Update results for Language Arts data in March 2025, approximately 15% of the students were emerging, 53% were developing, 26% were proficient, and 3% were extending. We were hoping to see an improvement in the proficient scores from developing to proficient in the overall written updates scores by 3-5% this school year. In March 2026, approximately 10% were emerging, 57.5% were developing, 30.5% were proficient, and 1.5% were extending. This shows that there was a slight improvement in scores from March 2025 to March 2026.

For the last two years, we collected data about the students' oral language abilities. Each classroom teacher completed a rubric for each student. This year, they completed one in November 2025 and one in April 2026. The beginning of the year data indicated that of the 407 students at the school at the time, 20% of our students were emerging, 48% of the students were developing, 30% of the students were proficient, and 2% of the students were extending. Our goal was to see an improvement of 5% of the students moving up one category, from November to April. In April, using the same rubrics, of the 397 students who were evaluated 11.6% were emerging, 33.8% were developing, 44.1% were applying and 10.6% were extending.

The students also completed reading assessments in November and April. In November, 18.8% of the intermediate students were considered at risk, 33.7% of the students had some risk, 47.5% of the students had negligible risk. Of the primary students, 63.6% of the students were either at risk or had some risk and 36.3% had negligible risk. For the Kindergarten students, 23% were considered at risk, 30% were at some risk, 46% were at a negligible risk. In April, 22.7% of the intermediate students were considered at risk, 21.2% of the students had some risk, 56.2% of the students had negligible risk. Of the primary students, 41% of the students were either at risk or had some risk and 58.7% had negligible risk. For the Kindergarten students, 51% were considered at risk, 13% were at some risk, 36% were at a negligible risk. When examining the results of the Kindergarten students, the teachers observed that the results did not represent what they have been seeing in alternative assessments.

We achieved our Language Arts, oral language, and reading goals. For next year, the staff decided to not focus on an oral language goal. Instead, we would like to focus on improving our reading skills. The goal would be to see a 3-5% increase when comparing the Written Update results for Language Arts between March 2026 and March 2027.

The curricular integration of Indigenous worldviews is an important aspect of education at Cunningham Elementary. The school recognizes the significance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems into the curriculum to promote understanding and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. At Cunningham Elementary, evidence of understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge is fostered within the school community through various initiatives. One way this is achieved is by embedding Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum across different subjects, such as incorporating Indigenous literature, art, history, and some language into lessons. For instance, teachers use books written by Indigenous authors, display Indigenous artwork in the classroom, and teach about the history of Indigenous peoples in the local area.

According to the results of the 2025 Student Learning Surveys, 99% of the Grade 4 students reported that they are learning about Indigenous Peoples sometimes, most of the time or all of the time. Of the Grade 7 students, 87% answered the same question with a response that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that they are learning about Indigenous Peoples. Based on the results of the 2026 Student Learning Surveys, 92% of the Grade 4 students and 87% of the Grade 7 students responded this way. Since we still have not achieved this goal, the staff would like to continue to aim for the goal of over 90% of Grades 4 and 7 answering this question in this way.

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

Through experiential and placed-based learning, we are working to improve and increase our students' reading skills. We are working towards a literacy goal in reading because reading is fundamental across all subjects.

A goal in developing their reading skills will help students in all subjects to explain their comprehension, such as being able to explain mathematical understanding and describe their scientific observations. Improved reading skills will allow students to critically think and make meaningful connections to the world around them.

Improve equity

We will strive to create opportunities for all students to actively participate and feel a sense of belonging within our community. Our equity focus is using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure that every student has access to the necessary support and resources to thrive academically and emotionally, contributing to their overall success and well-being in an educational setting.

By taking a Universal Design for Learning approach when teaching all subjects, we create an equitable learning environment. This will ensure success for all learners. All topics can be accessed and used by all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning styles. This ensures that learners can access information in a way that works best for them. By offering multiple options for engaging learners and stimulating their interest; it can provide choices on topics or activities, incorporating multimedia elements, offering hands-on experiences, and connecting learning to real-world contexts. By accommodating different interests and preferences, we can increase engagement and motivation for all learners.

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

At Cunningham, we are continuing on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit. At Cunningham, we embrace place-based learning in our classrooms and in our outdoor learning program. We understand that learning is holistic, experiential, and relational. An Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker supports staff and students to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are integrated into the curriculum in a meaningful and respectful way. Through these initiatives, Cunningham Elementary has created an inclusive learning environment that promotes respect for Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems.

This year, the Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker collaborated with classroom teachers to teach lessons exploring Indigenous cultures, with a focus on The Four Sacred Medicines (cedar, sage, sweet grass, tobacco). The students experienced tactile learning in the classes where they were given opportunities to feel and smell the medicines and learned the different uses of the medicines and what they represent. The students also learned how to smudge. By being in the classrooms, she is making

connections with the students who are Indigenous and is also exposing all of the students to different aspects of Indigenous cultures.

Indigenous learning is inherent within the outdoor learning program both through the way the students learn as it is hands-on, experiential, and connects students to the land. The content of the lessons includes learning Indigenous names of local plants, Indigenous perspectives and stories about the environment. All of our experiences in the outdoor learning program incorporate First Peoples Principles of Learning.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

To enrich students' reading skills, staff engage in rich conversations and discussions to increase the students' ability to critically think and to make predictions. Teachers will continue to reference the Vancouver School Board's Responsive Literacy Framework. This framework guides teachers to approach literacy (comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness and fluency) through the lens of First Peoples' Principles of Learning, place-based pedagogy, documentation and assessment, culturally-responsive pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning. They will continue to use visuals attached to words so that students can associate a visual when they see or hear a word.

Reading will be enriched through discussions of stories in guided reading groups, literature circles and whole class read alouds. Students will share what they are reading individually by doing book talks and presentations. They will develop opportunities to create their own stories with story workshops. Students will understand that there's a beginning, middle, and end, and this will increase the capacity of storytelling. It will also help them make connections, take more risks, and build their resilience.

We will know that we are on track by continuing to use reading assessments to measure growth and improvement over a six-month period. Conducting an assessment in October and then again in April, we will collect individual scores based on the assessments. By the end of the year, we believe that students will have shown an improvement in their reading scores.

In addition to using Universal Design for Learning and equity to help build community and belonging at Cunningham Elementary, the staff are using social emotional learning strategies and are providing leadership opportunities. To ensure that we are on track, it is important to establish clear benchmarks and measurable outcomes. These include things like changes in student behavior and engagement, increased participation in community projects, and positive feedback from students, families, and staff. Ongoing evaluation and data collection will be essential to assess progress towards these outcomes and make any necessary adjustments to the plan. Additionally, regular communication and collaboration among all stakeholders will be key to ensuring that everyone is working together towards the shared goal of building a strong and supportive school community.

Indigenous cultural activities and events are also important for fostering an understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge. To ensure we are on track, Cunningham Elementary will continue to invite Indigenous speakers to speak to students and organizes cultural field trips. These activities will provide students with a firsthand experience of Indigenous culture and help to develop a

deeper understanding and respect for Indigenous worldviews. Our school community will use Indigenous books and reading materials to deepen understanding, respect and appreciation of Indigenous Peoples, cultures and perspectives.

At Cunningham, we will continue to work on our goals to improve achievement, equity, and our journey of reconciliation.