



2025-2026 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that Henderson Elementary School is located on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation.

John Henderson Elementary School is named after John Henderson (1880–1968), a Vancouver engineer and School Trustee. The school shares its west grounds with Sunset Park, providing students with access to additional green space, a rock theatre, a larger playground, and an expansive grass playing field. On the east side of the school, students enjoy a smaller playground area that includes a playground structure, tarmac for games, a painted sensory pathway, and a space-net climbing area.

The school building is primarily one level, with a second floor on the south side, and is wheelchair accessible. Henderson serves close to 500 students from diverse socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, with many home languages represented throughout the school community. Henderson also benefits from a part-time Curriculum Enhancement Teacher who supports literacy development and early intervention, as well as a highly active StrongStart Centre that supports caregivers and children under five years old.

A full-time Youth and Family Worker (YFW) plays an important role in supporting food security, social-emotional learning, and community programming. Henderson is also fortunate to have onsite before- and after-school care provided by the South Slope YMCA, while many families access additional programming through Sunset Community Centre.

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, Henderson continued to support the goals of the Education Plan - student achievement, self-regulation, equity, belonging, and reconciliation by fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Staff intentionally fostered community through cross-grade collaborations and strengthened Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programming with support from the YFW and school counsellor. Research continues to show that social-emotional learning positively impacts student well-being, engagement, and success in learning. The better students can identify and describe their feelings, deal with stress

and manage their emotions, empathize with others, develop strong friendships, and have good problem-solving strategies, the better their outcomes in all respects (Raver & Knitzer 2002).

Henderson's vibrant school community is strengthened through a wide range of school events and extracurricular opportunities. Events such as the Scholastic Book Fair, annual winter concert, Fine Arts Showcase, Talent Show, Garden Club, Drama and Dance Club, and numerous sports teams help foster connection and belonging among students and families. Students also contribute meaningfully to school life through leadership opportunities including Student Council, Hawk Helpers, library monitors, and assembly leadership roles.

Henderson's dedicated staff create inclusive, inquiry-based, and hands-on learning experiences that nurture students' strengths, creativity, and curiosity. Strong community partnerships further enrich student learning and well-being. Ongoing partnerships with the Firefighters Snack Fund, Food4Schools Lunch Program, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, Sunset Community Centre, One-to-One Literacy, Arts Umbrella, and the Artist in Residence Program (AIRS) continue to support students and families. The John Oliver Community Links Team also provides valuable after-school and school-break programming, including Schools Out initiatives.

The Henderson Parent Advisory Council (PAC) continues to strengthen community connections through events such as monthly hot lunch days, a winter pancake breakfast, and the Spring Fling. Henderson also benefits from a highly engaged parent community that generously volunteers to support school projects, field trips, and community-building activities throughout the year.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

The Henderson community of roughly 500 learners is active, caring, engaged, and interested in learning. Students come from a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the broader community. Approximately 57% of students are identified as English Language Learners, with more than 39 languages and dialects spoken at home. The student population is diverse, with the major cultural groups being Punjabi, Filipino, and Spanish. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

One of the strengths of Henderson's diverse community is the positive impact it has on students' understanding and appreciation of others. Cultural celebrations are regularly shared throughout the school, and students proudly wear clothing connected to their cultural heritage and family traditions. Henderson continues to foster an inclusive environment where students feel welcomed, respected, and connected.

Henderson students are well supported by families who value education and learning. Many students and families are navigating the complexities of learning a second language and adapting to a new culture, community, and education system. School staff work closely with families to strengthen communication, support belonging, and build strong relationships within the school community.

Through class reviews, staff conversations, and daily interactions, Henderson students are consistently described as creative, kind, cooperative, and enthusiastic learners. Students value relationships with peers and staff, and many express that they enjoy coming to school because of the strong sense of connection they experience. To support engagement for all learners, teachers continue to incorporate inquiry-based learning, experiential opportunities, arts education, and outdoor learning experiences throughout the school.

Student leadership also remains an important part of school life. Students across all grade levels participate in Student Council, Hawk Helpers, and cross-grade buddy programs; helping to strengthen community and foster responsibility and belonging.

Staff work collaboratively to help students develop peaceful conflict resolution strategies, perspective-taking skills, emotional regulation, and readiness for learning. The school continues to support newcomer and refugee families as they integrate into the broader school community.

Research consistently demonstrates that students thrive when they feel connected, cared for, and supported by trusted adults. This was reflected in the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI 2026) data, 78% of students reported positive peer relationships, and 70% reported positive adult relationships at school. We also have seen great gains for the most vulnerable learners, with more increased engagement on tasks and time class or in the learning spaces designed to accommodate their needs as reflected in their CB-IEPs. These findings reinforce the importance of continuing to prioritize belonging, connection, and well-being as foundations for student success. We are curious to see if this data holds true for all grades and how 'regulation and relationships' (Dr. Stuart Shanker - Measuring What Matters, 2014) have impacted student achievement.

To support reconciliation, students and staff have continued to practice the correct pronunciation of the three host nations, as they practice making land acknowledgments. This is shared daily and at all school events, reinforcing our commitment to language reclamation and Call to Action 14.iv, which emphasizes the revitalization of Indigenous Languages.

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

During the 2025-2026 school year, our focus remained on building self-regulation skills and building relationships to increase student engagement in learning.

We are continuing to build stronger relationships and are turning our attention to focus on literacy, exploring how building relationships may correlate with academic growth. When we take a look at CSL literacy data for 2025-2026 in terms 1 and 2, we see that although literacy rates of Henderson students who are currently assessed as “Proficient” or “Extending” in literacy are roughly 41%, there was a 3% increase from term 1 to term 2. We also know that if we break down our literacy components,

students are stronger in reading decoding skills and oral language, and they struggle more with reading comprehension and written output. In numeracy, 58% of students are currently assessed as “Proficient” or “Extending”. To continue growth in both literacy and numeracy, teachers have been meeting to explore research-based teaching and assessment practices that they can implement across grade groups. We recognize that to truly support student achievement and growth we need to be more intentional in our collaboration with each other as staff, with students and with families. Through ongoing intentional collaboration, we want to design learning experiences and spaces that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners in our care. Our new inquiry question will be “Will sustained and ongoing intentional staff collaboration, aligned practices and co-designed strategies and learning experiences enhance student learning and success?”

At Henderson, we remain committed to supporting students’ physical and mental well-being through a variety of programs, activities, and learning opportunities. The students benefit from school wide programs and lessons supported by the school YFW, counsellor, and the AIRs program. Intermediate students participate in district sports teams and the Dance and Drama Clubs. Primary students engage in initiatives such as choir, Gardening Club, and Arts Umbrella dance workshops. Across all grade levels, students engaged in outdoor play and learning experiences that emphasized the importance of play, collaboration, and relationship-building. In the 2025-2026 MDI, 82 to 87% of students responded they are, to a medium or high level, happy/content in life, have a sense of self-worth, and have a positive mindset/optimistic. These results reflect the positive impact of the school’s ongoing focus on wellness, belonging, and connection.

Improve equity

We continue to design learning spaces and provide tools and implement strategies to provide all students with equitable access to learning. We do this by utilizing programs and practices such as Ready Bodies Learning Minds (RBLM), PATHS, sensory breaks, Response to Intervention Model (RTI), Universal Design for Learning lessons (UDL). We strive to be culturally responsive and continue to use literature to support inclusion and representation. Guided by Rudine Sims Bishop’s concept of books as “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors,” Henderson has expanded its collection of diverse texts and regularly welcomes guest speakers and performers who help deepen students’ understanding of the many cultures represented within the school community. We continue to add resources to our collection that are reflective of our diverse community.

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

Henderson continues to deepen its understanding and integration of the First Peoples Principles of Learning, which emphasize holistic, experiential, relational, and interconnected approaches to education. These principles guide the school’s work in fostering connectedness to self, community, and land.

All school-wide events begin with the official Vancouver School Board land acknowledgement, and formal events also include the Coast Salish Anthem. These practices help ground the school community in respect for place, land, and the original caretakers of these territories.

Throughout the year, classes explored the meaning and pronunciation of the land acknowledgement and engaged in conversations about Indigenous histories, perspectives, and present-day realities. Through guided discussions and reflective learning opportunities, students continue to build deeper understanding, empathy, and respect.

Henderson remains committed to creating a learning environment where all students feel a sense of belonging and responsibility to one another and the community. By embedding Indigenous perspectives into daily practices and classroom learning, the school continues to strengthen its commitment to reconciliation.

Looking ahead, Henderson plans to expand this work through collaboration with the AIRS Program and the City of Vancouver by participating in the Sunset Rainway Project, helping students explore how they can actively contribute to caring for their community and environment through stewardship.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will continue to monitor student learning and school growth through both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitative evidence will include school-wide assessment measures administered in the Fall and Spring, including:

- school-wide writing assessments,
- literacy screeners,
- numeracy screeners,
- Learning Updates and Summary of Learning proficiency scales,
- and data from the BC Student Learning Survey related to belonging, well-being, and academic growth.

In addition to quantitative data, Henderson values qualitative evidence that reflects the lived experiences of students, staff, and families. Self-reflections, stories, interviews, witnessing, and anecdotal feedback will continue to help inform our understanding of student engagement, belonging, and school climate.

The strength of relationships within the school community will remain an important indicator of success. Through newsletters, assemblies, PAC meetings, displays, announcements, and community gatherings, Henderson will continue to celebrate student learning, community connection, and collective growth.