



2025-2026 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

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

Nootka Elementary is in the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood on Vancouver’s east side, next to Renfrew Community Centre, Still Creek, and Renfrew Ravine. These natural and community spaces support the school’s commitment to place-based learning.

Our students reflect the cultural diversity of Vancouver, including families with Indigenous and settler backgrounds from Canada and around the world. Nootka welcomes, guides, and elevates over 370 students from across the city to attend Nootka in 17 divisions, bringing a wide range of experiences, interests, and learning strengths. In a mid-year staff meeting, one teacher aptly observed that Nootka—as a school, embedded within the neighborhood—is “many communities united, coming together.”

Nootka offers three programs: the English K–7 catchment program, the District Fine Arts Program, and the Elementary Learning Support Program for grades 4–7. All students receive music instruction from specialist teachers. The Fine Arts Program emphasizes Visual Arts, Dance, Drama, and Music. Students in grades 4–7 also take fine arts electives. This year, students and staff presented several performances, including a sold-out production of *Newsies*, student written plays, and multiple music showcases. Previous productions include *Lion King Jr.*, *Matilda*, and others, with *Lion King Jr.* earning third place in the 2026 Canadian Young Theatre Awards. Students in the Classic Learning Program develop deep academic understanding, practical problem-solving skills, and strong citizenship by engaging in rich real world field studies, cross grade learning and mentorship, and meaningful explorations of social justice and community issues. Examples include students sharing their self-choreographed dance performances to seniors in a nearby community home and students leading fundraising events to support school programs and initiatives. While Nootka is comprised of three unique programs, the spirit of “many communities coming together” is evident in the way creativity lives in paintings and drawing on display boards throughout the school, the sports teams the bring all

students together, the community-building events led by PAC such as family dances, movie nights, and the popular spring fair, and school-wide assemblies to celebrate a range of experiences and learning.

Nootka staff are dedicated professionals, comprised of a robust community of teaching, support, custodial, and administrative staff working together to create an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to student needs. They participate in regular professional development, including training in structured literacy, trauma-informed education, restorative practices, regulation through sensory programming, and strength-based assessment. In addition, teaching staff work actively with Teacher Candidates to support a new generation of teachers entering the profession.

Students and staff are supported by a Youth and Family Worker and an Area Counsellor, who help with social/emotional learning and extracurricular activities. Before and after school care is offered through Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House and the Renfrew Community Centre.

Nootka's single level, horseshoe shaped building includes a central courtyard, Library Learning Commons, dance studio, drama room, a technology-forward room used for digital learning and music composition, and a gym with a stage. We have created Sensory Room to support student regulation, supported by VSB District Learning services, with the next steps being the development of a combined *Ready Bodies Learning Minds* (RBLM) and quiet sensory/break room. Outdoor areas include raised garden beds, play structures, a circular *rock-and-sand* exploration space, and outdoor musical instruments—providing a wide range of hands-on learning opportunities.

Aligned with the district's Indigenous Enhancement Agreement, the school is on the pathway of including Indigenous content across all grades. High expectations and growth mindset practices guide teaching, supported by a restorative Code of Conduct.

Students can take on multiple leadership roles such as Library Monitors, Crossing Guards, Lunch Monitors, Peer Helpers, Rainbow Club, and the Student Led Arts and Craft Club. Nootka also offers clubs like Textiles, Games, and Scrapbooking, along with multiple sports teams. Nootka sports teams are passionate, committed, and dedicated to improvement and teamwork.

At Nootka, our mission is to nurture engaged learners who work together and contribute positively to their community.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Nootka's community of learners is characterized by a wide range of strengths, interests, and learning needs. Students benefit from collaborative learning environments that support academic growth, belonging, and well-being. School-based data indicates strong student engagement, particularly in socially motivated learning opportunities, alongside continued opportunities for growth in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use a variety of instructional practices, ongoing assessment, and differentiated approaches to support and challenge all learners.

Nootka is enriched by a diverse student population that includes many English Language Learners, families new to Canada, and students from across Vancouver who attend the Fine Arts and Early Learning Support programs. Students demonstrate varied interests across the arts, athletics, academics, and community involvement.

Through staff reflection and thematic analysis throughout the 2025/2026 year, several characteristics of Nootka students emerged. Students are:

- self-advocates who value having a voice and leadership opportunities;
- caring individuals who thrive when they feel connected;
- resilient learners who persevere through challenges;
- creative thinkers who enjoy hands-on learning and authentic self-expression;
- they learn at varied rates, benefit from explicit instruction and organizational supports, and;
- they seek meaningful ways to contribute to their community.

A review of 2024–2025 proficiency-scale data shows that more than half of students achieved Proficiency in Language Arts and Mathematics each term, continuing a positive multi-year trend. At the same time, students represent the full range of performance levels, underscoring the importance of responsive instruction that meets learners where they are.

Student needs are supported through a range of programs and strategies, including sensory and self-regulation spaces, multiple communication approaches, assistive technology, personalized supports, and strong relationships with caring adults.

Staff use classroom, school-based, and large-scale assessment data to guide instructional decisions and respond to student needs. Social-emotional learning is strengthened through co-created classroom expectations, daily check-ins, and collaborative problem-solving, helping students develop empathy, communication skills, and shared responsibility within the school community.

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

Goal: Literacy Skills & Meaning-Making

Nootka Elementary will improve literacy achievement for all learners by strengthening foundational reading skills through structured literacy practices in the primary grades and deepening comprehension, critical thinking, and communication skills in the intermediate grades. Through targeted instruction, collaborative support, and authentic literacy experiences, students will develop the confidence and skills needed to be successful readers, writers, and communicators.

Rationale

Improving literacy achievement supports the Vancouver School Board's goal of enhancing student achievement and helps students develop the BC Core Competencies of Communication and Critical Thinking. Current report card data shows that 58.35% of students are achieving at the Proficient or Extending level in English Language Arts, while more than 70% of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students in the 2025/2026 Student Learning Survey report that they are "getting better at reading and writing."

While a strong percentage of Nootka students are demonstrating steady growth in literacy achievement, we recognize that many factors can contribute to or create barriers to student success. Approximately 40% of students continue to benefit from flexible instruction, targeted support, and focused attention to further develop their literacy skills and competencies.

Key Actions

The actions supporting this goal were identified through staff collaboration, peer mentorship, and professional learning. They build on existing strengths while remaining responsive to student learning needs.

Primary: Structured Literacy. Examples of strategies and activities include:

- Daily implementation of UFLI, a structured literacy program emphasizing skills of phonemic and phonetic awareness
- DIBELS assessments to identify students needing additional support and monitor progress.
- 1:1 reading support with volunteer literacy mentors.
- Buddy reading opportunities that promote literacy development and a love of reading.
- Collaborative classroom and resource support for targeted intervention.

Intermediate: Comprehension and Meaning-Making. Examples of strategies and activities include:

- Novel studies, projects, and presentations that promote critical thinking, peer collaboration, and multiple ways of demonstrating learning.
- Authentic writing opportunities, including poetry, stories, and plays for publication or performance.
- Reflective writing to deepen learning and personal connections.
- Technical and academic writing experiences such as science reports, research projects, and learning reflections.

Professional Learning to Support This Goal

Staff will continue to strengthen their implementation of structured literacy practices and engage in class reviews three times per year to identify learning needs and plan responsive instruction. Dedicated staff meetings will examine DIBELS results, achievement scale information, and school-wide writing samples to inform instructional planning and intervention.

Staff will also improve the organization and use of student learning information to support School-Based Team decision-making and continue refining the school's resource support model.

Indicators of Success

- Increased proficiency in foundational literacy skills as evidenced through DIBELS, achievement scales, and other assessments.
- Improved student comprehension, communication, and writing skills.

- Greater student engagement in reading and writing.
- Increased student confidence, belonging, and enjoyment of literacy learning.

Improve equity

Goal: Equity through Inclusion and Belonging

Nootka Elementary will continue to strengthen our culture of inclusion so that every student feels valued, connected, and able to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

Rationale

Nootka has a strong foundation and history of inclusive practices that support student learning, well-being, and belonging. As we continue to grow, we recognize that inclusion must remain a guiding lens for decisions about learning, extracurricular opportunities, and school-wide experiences.

Student Learning Survey results suggest that belonging and connection remain important areas of focus. While most Grade 4 and 7 students report feeling welcome and safe at school, and more than 60% indicate they like school “*most*” or “*all of the time*”, approximately 40% report liking school only “*sometimes*” or “*almost never*”. We aim to continue strengthening positive experiences of belonging, engagement, and success for all students.

How was this goal selected?

This goal emerged through ongoing conversations among enrolling teachers, non-enrolling teachers, support staff, education assistants, and administrators, which identified *inclusion* and *belonging* as important areas for continued growth and focus.

What actions will we take to support this goal?

Staff will continue to embed inclusive practices across classrooms and school programs, ensuring equitable access, participation, and belonging for all students. Through class reviews, School-Based Team discussions, and collaboration with students and families, we will identify and respond to barriers while expanding opportunities for engagement and success.

This past year, we actively promoted school and community-connected experiences such as participation in the School Streets program, the ArtStarts Van Go experience, music concerts, musical theatre productions, the enthusiastically positive Pride celebration in early June, and frequent field experiences throughout Vancouver. These opportunities support belonging, independence, cultural awareness, physical activity, and equitable access to arts, athletics, and community learning. We will continue to build on these experiences while supporting social-emotional learning, self-regulation, leadership, and connection. It is through positive experiences of *connection* that a sense of *belonging* emerges.

To support the promotion of positive relationships and peaceful approaches to problem solving, we will implement the WITs program, an anti-bullying program that teaches students safe and positive ways to handle conflict. In addition, a student-led “buddy bench” system will be introduced at recess and lunch to promote care and friendship amongst the students.

Further, our commitment to equity is reflected in the ways students are provided with a variety of pathways to support learning readiness. This includes the development of a Sensory Room to support regulation, breaks and quiet/alternative spaces for students to work, and whole-class lessons highlighting social/emotional growth, perspective-taking, social justice, and the guest programs to promote positive relationships and body health.

Key Indicators of Success

- Future BC Student Learning Survey results identify student perspectives on their sense of school belonging, safety, and connection.
- Continued participation in extracurricular activities, athletics, leadership opportunities, arts experiences, and community-based learning.
- The continued infusion of inclusive language and practices across classrooms, school programs, and school-wide events.

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

Our school is committed to an ongoing journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. This year, staff participated in two professional learning days focused on Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing: the District Indigenous Professional Development Day and a school-based learning day. During our school session, staff explored storytelling through an Indigenous lens, examined Indigenous resources within our library, and shared strategies for authentically weaving Indigenous perspectives into classroom practice.

We are fortunate to have a teacher lead a morning song twice each week, creating a meaningful and much-loved gathering for students, staff, and community members. Students also have opportunities to connect with the natural world through experiences in the local ravine, where they engage with water, trees, earth, and nature as places of beauty, sanctuary, and learning. Through caring for our garden boxes, students learn about natural cycles, stewardship, and the rhythms of care. Land acknowledgements are shared at meetings and community gatherings to recognize and honour the Indigenous peoples who have cared for this land since time immemorial.

As we continue this journey, we are committed to ongoing professional and personal learning, creating space for dialogue, experience, and deeper understanding. Our goal is to ensure that Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing are authentically woven into the daily life of our classrooms and school community—not as a performative act, but as a natural and meaningful rhythm of learning and belonging.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Amongst many approaches, we will highlight the following strategies to help us know we are on track during the 2026–2027 school year:

- DIBELS reading and literacy assessment for K–3 at key points of the year
- School-wide writes (Fall 2026 and Spring 2027).
 - Other assessments: CORE phonics survey, DRA/F&P reading assessments, DIBLES assessments, VSB P3 assessment tools.
- A per term class review of strengths and needs based on the visual TIER 123 class-casting data created June 2026.
- Continued review of available data to help determine areas of focus and next steps for student learning, including 2025/2026 CSL proficiency scale data, results from the Student Learning Survey, and other large-scale assessment
- Regular staff reflections during Staff Meetings focused on student learning

At Nootka Elementary, we will know we are making progress when everyone—students, staff and guests alike—experience a calm, respectful buzz of learning throughout the school. Students will increasingly solve everyday conflicts independently, while knowing when to seek adult support for more complex situations. We expect to see growth in the Student Learning Survey results, particularly in areas of student voice, belonging, and experience as we continue to create learning environments where all students can flourish and succeed.