



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 Musqueam people. Southlands is proud to be the catchment school for students from the Musqueam nation.

Southlands Elementary School is a warm, welcoming, multicultural, and diverse community with a strong focus on building a sense of belonging. We are an International Baccalaureate School, servicing students in kindergarten to Grade 7. Southlands has up-to-date IB accreditation and is in full compliance with International Baccalaureate criteria. As such, we focus on noticing, naming, and nurturing the Learner Profile Attributes. We facilitate learning experiences in which students can become knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring risktakers, communicators, and thinkers. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, our staff collaborates in planning transdisciplinary units of inquiry and is dedicated to fostering the 10 attributes of the IB learner profile. The school is heading into an IB evaluation year in 2026/27.

Our staff is committed to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and principles of learning into every aspect of the curriculum. We maintain strong home-school relationships through regular communication and have a supportive parent/guardian community that helps us achieve our goals. Southlands is focused on outdoor education, utilizing our location next to Pacific Spirit Park as an access point for students to explore the forest and the natural world.

The Southlands community reflects the First People's Principles of Learning and acknowledges the importance of living in harmony with the environment, recognizing the land as a source of knowledge and identity. Both the IB curriculum and the First Peoples' Principles of Knowing advocate for a comprehensive, respectful, and reflective approach to education. They encourage learners to engage deeply with knowledge, appreciate diverse perspectives, and recognize the interconnectedness of all aspects of life. This alignment not only enriches the Southlands educational experience but also fosters a greater understanding of our shared humanity and responsibility towards the world.

Students at Southlands Elementary are supported by an amazing staff of educators that includes 9 classroom teachers, 5 resource teachers, an Indigenous enhancement worker, a curriculum enhancement teacher, 9 student support workers, a counsellor, a youth and family worker, 2 supervision aides, and many more individuals who make up our team. We are a host of One-to-One

readers, Jericho Kids Club, Big Brothers and other programs that support our community throughout the year.

Our community is actively focused on caring for Ourselves, Others and this Place. Alongside those expectations we are working towards improving our ability to provide equitable education, a sense of well-being, and belonging. We are also working towards sustained, impactful reconciliation.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, Southlands Elementary is committed to continuous growth and excellence in education. We are currently preparing for our **IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) Evaluation**, scheduled for 2027. This evaluation is a significant milestone that occurs every five years and serves as a comprehensive review of our implementation of the IB philosophy, standards, and practices.

The IB evaluation process involves:

- **A thorough self-study** conducted by the school community, including staff, students, and families.
- **Evidence collection** of teaching practices, student learning, and community engagement aligned with IB standards.
- **Professional development** to ensure all staff are well-versed in IB pedagogy and the Learner Profile attributes. Approaches to learning pedagogy encompasses "Approaches to Teaching"
- **Curriculum review and refinement** to ensure transdisciplinary units of inquiry are robust, inclusive, and reflective of global and local contexts.
- **A site visit** by IB evaluators who will observe classrooms, review documentation, and meet with stakeholders.

We are proud to say that Southlands is in an **excellent position** to succeed in this evaluation. Our staff is deeply committed to the IB philosophy, and we have already embedded many of the core elements of the PYP into our daily practice. Our focus on student agency, inquiry-based learning, and international-mindedness is evident throughout the school.

In preparation for 2027, we will:

- Continue to build staff capacity through targeted IB professional development.
- Strengthen documentation and reflection practices.
- Deepen integration of Indigenous perspectives and local knowledge into units of inquiry.
- Engage the community in the self-study process to ensure a shared understanding of our goals and achievements.

This journey toward evaluation is not just about meeting standards about reaffirming our commitment to providing a world-class, inclusive, and reflective education for every learner at Southlands.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Southlands welcomes a unique community of learners. We are the proud host to over 60 students from Musqueam, we have a large cohort of International Education students from all over the world, we also service several families that are new to Canada. This diversity fosters a rich learning environment where students feel welcomed and included as part of the community from day one.

Students love the outdoors; we are situated on Musqueam land and are lucky to be surrounded by forests with access to hiking trails. We often take advantage of this proximity to nature through forest walks and other activities.

Our learners are strong, resilient, and intelligent. They are creative, hard-working, collaborative, and self-starters. We are a student-centered school community with countless opportunities for student leadership, participation, and action in our school. We are working towards incorporating more authentic student agency into our everyday practices and look forward to having more students lead their own learning and lead more experiences for students.

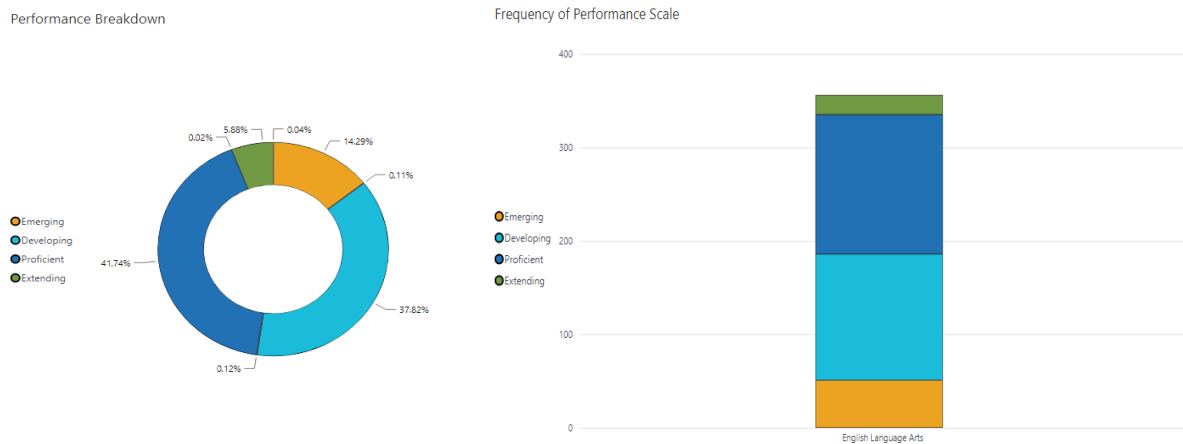
Being an IB school allows students to view the world through that lens; we focus on the Learner Profile Attributes of the IB program and take a thoughtful approach to learning about our community, the land, the globe and how everything is interconnected. Some are more confident learners than others. Students come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, and many speak two or three languages. They welcome students who are new to our school and are appreciative of differences.

We are in year 2 of incorporating Think Sheets into our day-to-day activities. A think sheet is a way for students to reflect on things that have happened and to learn to be accountable for their actions. We are hopeful that this process leads to an improved restorative justice approach. Students will explain what happened and how they were feeling at the time; sometimes we make interesting choices when we're hungry or tired or excited, and it is an important part of the process to identify those feelings. Think sheets are an opportunity to learn and grow; students develop executive functioning, self-awareness, cognitive flexibility, and emotional regulation skills.

This year we introduced "Caught Ya! Cards", these cards acknowledge students who have been caught in the act of committing positive acts that fall in line with our Learner Profile Attributes and approaches to Learning (ATLs). These Caught Ya cards result in a pom pom being put into our Caught Ya jar. When that jar is full, the entire school benefits from an agreed upon prize. This year we have collected over 1200 Caught Ya Cards and counting!

The data from our Student Learning Surveys (SLS) from 2025/26 shows that overall, students are happy and comfortable here at Southlands. There is a strong sense of belonging, well-being, and a recognition that the majority of students feel they are improving their academics on a regular basis. When asked, "Is school a place where you feel you belong?" Over 80% of our Grade 4 and 7 students responded positively. Over 90% of students also responded positively to the question, "Do you feel safe at school?" One of the survey results that stood out was to the question, "At school, are you learning to be a critical thinker?" About 80% of our students responded positively, district-wide responses were much lower. We can attribute this to our IB curriculum and a focus on being a "thinker" and "enquirer". We acknowledge that continued work is needed for fostering a further sense of community and respect.

Our community of learners also presents some gaps in literacy rates. Just over 50% of our students are at the proficient or extending level in Language Arts. This is something we are working to improve through consistent literacy interventions at a schoolwide level.



We have a diverse group of students who excel in many different ways. One of our goals at Southlands is to recognize the genius in every single one of our students and provide a learning environment that allows all students to flourish.

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

At Southlands we view literacy as access. All our IB learner profile attributes require a level of literacy, and we are striving to improve literacy rates across the school community. We have identified gaps in literacy and numeracy achievement in our school. We have seen improvement over the last 2 years but are looking to increase our rates even more. We are in our third full year of a schoolwide literacy intervention. We take a schoolwide approach and work collaboratively to address literacy teaching strategies in the school. After some experimentation with different programs we are using UFLI, StoryChamps, DRA and Dibels as our primary materials. We are lucky to host One to One Readers and to have a Curriculum Enhancement teacher at Southlands, both support our literacy program, focusing on those who require enhanced support.

We are currently working towards a schoolwide numeracy intervention. We have found success in small group numeracy instruction. As a staff we are looking at ways to increase our numeracy rates across the school. Our UDL approach to teaching numeracy has shown positive results this year and we are looking to increase this approach more next year.

With physical and mental well-being and belonging in mind, we have a Forest Walk program where students explore the forest with our counsellor, principal, and other staff members. We practice mindfulness while exercising. Over the last two years we have built a more robust athletics department. Our Grade 7 class of 2025 donated equipment to start a recess equipment program. This program has been a hit with students and allows students to borrow balls, jump ropes, frisbees and other equipment to play with and stay active.

We have also supported more students in joining sports teams here at Southlands. We have had a basketball team for the last 2 years and also had a Track and Field and Cross Country team. We are doing Volleyball intramurals as well. We've also had a partnership with a UBC Kinesiology class whose students have come to the school and provided coaching for basketball and soccer, as well as other fitness instruction.

Belonging is a strength of our school community. We have many new students every year and these new community members are welcomed quickly. That being said, we are still working on improving the sense of belonging in our community. We have started a Diversity club, knitting club, chess club, art club and more. These clubs provide a time for students to do things they enjoy with peers they can connect with.

Improve equity

The staff at Southlands are committed to an equitable approach. We believe that having a schoolwide literacy plan is part of our equity efforts. We are also looking at how we can offer more opportunities to our students who don't often get opportunities in and out of school. We believe that every student should have an opportunity to learn and experience the things that they are interested in.

Equity is not always equal but it serves those who have been systemically impacted by a number of factors. If we can work to remove barriers from those who face obstacles in everyday life, we can bring about a more equitable school environment.

One of the initiatives we are working on is teaming up with community partners to provide additional opportunities to students who may not normally have access. We have partnered with St George's school to create a mentor program that provides leadership sessions for some of our upper intermediate students.

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

We are in a unique position here at Southlands. As the school for Musqueam students we have the potential to be a district leader in reconciliatory practices. We are in the midst of bringing more Indigenous practices into our school, focusing on learning the Musqueam language, **hə́ŋqəmiŋəm**, and also bringing in more drumming practices into the school. We are also working on a new mural for the school. We have monthly meetings with the Musqueam education department to discuss how we can work together to support our students from Musqueam. We believe that reconciliation begins with relationships and centering student voices. We use restorative practices and are focused on interconnectedness in everything we do here at the school.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Southlands is a strong community with engaged students and families. It is such a unique school, due to its diversity, location, and IB programming. There is no other school like it in Vancouver. Our goals are aligned to the goals of the Vancouver School Board. We are focused on equity, reconciliation and student achievement and well-being. We track these goals in a number of ways.

Schoolwide Literacy Program

Every student at Southlands participates in our schoolwide literacy program. We provide targeted literacy interventions to support the development of decoding, comprehension, and writing skills for all learners.

Student Learning Survey data shows that 80% of our Grade 4 students feel they are improving in their writing. Literacy data indicates that just over 75% of our Grade 4 students are reading at or above grade level, while most of the remaining 25% have also demonstrated growth this year.

Overall, primary literacy data shows that we are making strong progress toward our goal of having 80% of students reading at grade level. Our primary students have shown meaningful improvement, thanks to an engaged and committed staff and a clear plan for literacy development. With the support of the curriculum enhancement teacher and resource team, staff have implemented a schoolwide approach that allows us to meet students where they are and provide targeted, direct instruction.

Belonging and Well-Being

According to Student Learning Survey (SLS) data, 83% of our Grade 4 and Grade 7 students report that they feel welcome at school “always” or “most of the time.” This reflects an improvement from last year and highlights the impact of our intentional strategies to strengthen a sense of belonging. Notably, 94% of Grade 7 students report feeling welcome at school.

This sense of belonging is also reflected in the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), a UBC-based student well-being survey. Southlands Grade 6 students reported very strong results in peer belonging, with 90% responding positively—well above the district average. Additionally, 80% of students agreed with the statement, “At my school there is an adult who believes I will be a success,” demonstrating the positive relationships students have with staff. When asked about their academic self-concept, 90% of Grade 6 students responded positively.

Student Learning Survey results show progress in teaching about Indigenous Peoples in Canada, with 89% of Grade 4 and 7 students indicating they are learning about Indigenous perspectives regularly. We will continue to build on this in 2025–2026, with a goal of weaving Indigenous principles and perspectives into all aspects of learning at Southlands.

Our journey of reconciliation

We continue to look at data-based and anecdotal tracking so that we can ensure we continue to address reconciliation efforts. We will also continue to focus on Indigenous ways of learning in professional development sessions as a staff. Southlands is working towards developing further collaborations with the Musqueam community for art and music. We also gather community feedback, conduct informal walkthroughs of the school and classrooms, collect student reflections and promote student leadership and action.